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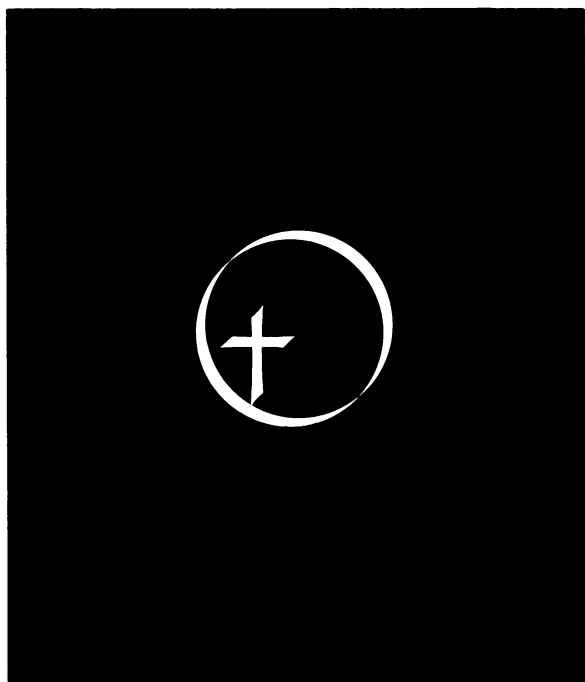
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A

SICKLE FOR THE HARVEST.

BY G. V. MAXHAM,

MINISTER OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IN ERIE, PA.

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TO
THE HON. JOHN GALBRAITH.

SIR;—I have taken the liberty to dedicate this Volume to you, as a slight token of the great respect which I owe to your character; and from a sense of what is due to you, from every lover of our Blessed Faith in this Community.

If this Volume shall be received by many firesides, if it shall be borne to the broken-hearted, to the captives, and to them that are bound, and if it shall give comfort to the mourner, joy to the poor in spirit, and a glimpse of approaching freedom to the imprisoned mind, I am sure that no one will rejoice over it more than yourself, knowing as I do that your heart, hand and purse are engaged in the same work.

I beg your kind acceptance of it; while I assure you that the many deeds of kindness, and the many words of encouragement, that I have received from you will live in my memory warm and fresh until the heart that dictates and the hand that writes this acknowledgment are no more.

Yours most Truly,

G. V. MAXHAM.

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NOTE.

The Author claims no merit; he asks for no praise; therefore will not his faults and imperfections be looked upon by the Reader with a lenient eye and a kindly spirit? Should the critic be severe, it will be felt; should the Volume itself prove a failure, it will bring sad but silent disappointment to one who, while he entertained none of those glowing expectations which so often attend upon the issue of one's *first volume*, had hoped to do some little good.

As the publication of a small volume of original sermons by one of our home preachers, for distribution by the traveling agents of the Lake Erie Missionary Society, was very generally desired, the Author was solicited to furnish the matter for such a volume. In complying with this solicitation he selected from the *Mss.* that he had on hand, written during the first year of his ministry and preached in the ordinary ministrations of the pulpit, such sermons as he thought would prove the most useful and give the best satisfaction to the friends of the Cause within the limits of the Association. Had he been anxious solely for a literary reputation he would have made a somewhat different selection; but in that case the Volume would have been less polemic and consequently, in the Section for which it is intended, less valuable. In a section of country like this, where in many townships our blessed Doctrine has been but recently promulgated, and where the opposition is sometimes fierce and venomous, polemical sermons, written in a plain and fearless manner, are the most useful and effective.

The Reader will occasionally observe a lack of symmetry and an abruptness of transition, for which the Author makes apology by stating that many passages were cut out, and sometimes entire heads even, in order that a given number of sermons might be embraced in the Volume which was restricted to a certain number of pages.

It is intended that one-third of the sum raised from the sale of the Volume, by its agents, shall go into the Fund of the Association together with whatever pecuniary benefit the Author may receive.

I.

THE ATTRIBUTES.

"Thou art Good, and doest Good."—PSALM cxix, 68.

THE first principles of Theology consist in believing that there is one eternal, immutable, omnipresent God, the creator, preserver and governor of the Universe ; who is an uncreated, self-existent, independent spirit ; whose attributes are infinite goodness, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy and truth.

These attributes all harmonize one with another and blend together in the formation of a perfect character—the "One Good." They are as so many rays, each infinite in reach, centering in the same sun ; and because they are infinite, it is impossible for any antagonistic element or elements to exist with them in the same being. They form, therefore, an infallible standard by which to judge of the nature and disposition of him by whom they are possessed, and

by which all controverted opinions in Theology are to be tested. Any opinion not in harmony with these attributes is false, and should be discarded.

As we are dependent on God for all we have and all we are to have throughout the countless ages of eternity, it is of vast importance to us to know his true character and his disposition toward us. Therefore let us make the test by the infallible standard that we have.

If God is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful, it follows that whatever his wisdom in the beginning prompted him to do, that he could do beyond the possible hinderance of any obstacle whatever; and as his wisdom is clothed with goodness, justice and mercy, and as he could see, being omniscient, the end from the beginning, the nature, the tendency and the result of all things, it follows from infinite necessity that whatever is created by him must be good in its contribution to the great final good.

If God is omniscient and immutable, he cannot think, for thinking is the act of recalling what is forgotten, or of deliberating upon what is not, but is to be arranged. He is above those revolutions of mind which characterize a finite

being. Moreover with his infinite attributes, he can act only as he acts in the carrying forward of one great plan. He can have but one plan, and that is infinite. To say that he plans one thing and then plans another, is to imply a succession of ideas. But if there was such a succession he could not be omniscient. The creation of the universe and of man—the sin of our first parents—the deluge of the earth—the exodus of the children of Israel and their occupation of the promised land—the advent of Christ and his death—the invention of the art of printing—the discovery and application of the power of steam—the building of a crystal palace, and I allude to these events as standing out boldly upon the pages of history—are but connected links in, and successive movements toward the accomplishment of, the one great plan. The deeds of nations as well as of individuals, whether we judge them to be good or bad, all concentrate within this plan, like wheels within a wheel. To say that any deed is performed outside of this plan, and independent of it, is to say that that deed was not foreseen by the great Framers. To his eye in his unlimited capacity, every thing from the beginning to the end is present, every act from the most mi-

nute to the greatest, its tendency and its mate bearing upon the final accomplishment to the eye of the skillful watchmaker, in its limited capacity, are the springs and the wheels of the watch that he is making. But would the watchmaker *think* beyond a doubt that the main-spring of his watch will move the hands and the wheels the hands and that the hands will tell the hour, God *knew* from all eternity that the main-spring in his great plan would work and how it would work—and that the little wheels and all the great wheels would work and how they would work, and what destiny the hands would slowly point. Should the watch-maker, finite and feeble, be desirous of making a perfect watch, and of the harmony and usefulness of his mechanism by adding a wheel too much or one out of its size and shape, we would have good reason to question his skill. though we might perhaps be surprised. But what shall we say if the great artisan, the Father of all, fails of accomplishing his plan according to purpose? If such a failure occurs, it would overthrow our belief in his infinite attribute of power, and that his capacity, like that of the poor feeble watch-maker is limited. God

possesses infinite perfections, can no more sin, can no more create what might prove evil in its ultimate result, than the heat of the noon-day sun can turn the waters of yonder lake into ice! The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews, declares that it is impossible for God to lie. But this does not destroy the infinity of his attributes, nor of any one of them, whatever contradiction there may appear to be in the use of terms. But instead, this very impossibility proves his infinity. A finite being may be good or bad, judged by his acts as they appear to us. He may be upright to-day, and to-morrow he may sin, from the fact that he is finite. But God is the same forever,—being infinitely wise he cannot err,—being infinitely good he cannot do wrong—being infinitely holy he cannot commit sin—were he to do either it would disprove his infinity. He can do nothing contrary to his nature. Whatever he does must be right.

In the boundless realm of creation there is nothing to obstruct the operation of his goodness, it operates infinitely,—but whatever it produces, whatever it brings to pass, must partake of the nature of its Cause and harmonize with it. Infinite goodness cannot produce infinite evil.

God's goodness is infinite ; therefore there can be no absolute or infinite evil.

If God is infinitely good, it is absurd to say that he has created a single spirit, and spirit is the only immortal creation that we know of in the universe, to be evil, and to do evil to all eternity. What, infinite goodness create infinite evil ! As christians we believe that there is an endless heaven of peace, purity and harmony bending above our prayers and our hopes ; a heaven worthy of a being of infinite perfections,—as christians, a large portion of us believe also in an endless hell of sin, misery and corruption unworthy even of a devil. If there is, as according to the popular theology, a local heaven, it must have been created, if there is a local hell, it must have been created—but not by the same original Power. God, with his glorious attributes, could no more have created the infernal hell that burns and swelters through the popular theology, than Satan, I speak as if it were possible for such a monster to exist, could have created the beautiful and serene heaven that glows through the same. If such a heaven is created, it must have been created by a being of infinite perfections and power ; and hell by a being equally powerful and as vicious as the

former is good. Therefore, as they could not have been created by the same Power, it follows that there are two infinite, antagonistic powers acting behind all that is created. But such cannot possibly be the case. There can exist but one infinite power. Two powers of equal magnitude and force could neither of them be infinite because the one could not overcome the other, and therefore each would be limited. Nor can an infinite being carry forward two infinite plans, nor can two such plans possibly exist. An infinite plan, because infinite, and consequently boundless, embraces necessarily all things else. Therefore, if there is an infinite God there can be no other infinite being or power—if he has laid an infinite plan, he can have laid but one such plan ; and if he is infinitely wise, good and just, it follows that that one plan must be perfect in all its parts, and if so, that it must result in harmony, order and the best possible good.

The plan of an infinite being must tend, according to the attributes of that being, toward an accomplishment of infinite good, an infinite heaven, or an accomplishment of infinite evil, an infinite hell, as unerringly as the needle tends toward its attracting magnet.

If there were such a being as the Satan that

is represented in the popular theology were his diabolical passions and power in and were he the framer of the one infinite could we look forward to the accomplishment of that plan as to the accomplishment a triumph, forever and forever, of the good, the beautiful? or as the triumph of good in one sphere and of evil in another? would we not look upon it as the accomplishment and the triumph of all evil without a redeeming ray of good, from the fact that evil could not exist in the framer and executor of a plan one principle to engender such a result?

As God is the very opposite of the being represented, must we not look forward to the accomplishment of his divine plan as to the accomplishment of all good without a stain of evil, from the fact that there does not exist that great and glorious being one principle to produce such a stain?

An infinite being must be infinitely good and infinitely bad. If he is infinitely good and powerful, it follows that nothing evil could exist, however things may appear in our ignorance and shortsightedness, favorable in its tendency and its ultimate result to the first of the foregoing, goodness.

God has created a single soul that shall sin forever, and if he knew before that soul was created what would be its destiny, our belief in his infinite goodness and wisdom falls to the ground. The very act of creating that soul was a sin vastly greater than any sin which that soul will ever commit—a sin equal in itself to all the sins which that soul will ever commit united.

If God is perfectly good and wise, it follows as a natural and unavoidable consequence that all the evils of life must be designed to effect a benevolent purpose, and that ultimately they will work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As finite beings, we are incapable of judging how the world ought to be governed; and it is not for us, feeble and blind as we are, to reconcile all the seeming inequalities of the divine government. As well might the puny babe, drawing its food from its mother's breast, grasp and understand all the complex machinery of human government. We are, the wisest and best of us, but infants pleased with our coral and rattle in this great nursery of God's universe. We shall be wiser by and by when freed from these swaddling bands of flesh. It is enough for us to obey our Father and not murmur; to trust in him and be hope-

ful—remembering that though clouds and darkness are around about us—(Ah, it is dark only to those who look through the heated clay !) goodness, mercy and love the habitation of his throne.

The best hypothesis that I have seen what appears to us as evil in its presentings is a necessary part of the best system a being of infinite perfections could make. Well has it been said “that in the economy of Divine providence there is a chain that cannot be broken. It is disposed, in a certain form, but every link is forged and placed in its finite wisdom, occupies a station which cannot be disconnected with great and important events, the smallest part cannot be removed by the expense of deranging the whole.”

“Cease then, nor order imperfection name
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame
All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou cannot see
All discord harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good ! ”

In this connection we may ask, for what purpose and with what designation did thou create us, for surely he did not create without a purpose and a design ? I see no difficulty in answering this question. If God is t

and good being that we believe him to be, he must have created man—but a little lower than the angels—for a noble and benevolent purpose, designing to place him finally in a state of happiness as exalted and delightful as the capacity of a finite being will admit of. This is the only conclusion that we can arrive at, unless we crucify at once our belief concerning the attributes of God. A finite being even, had he the power, unless the heart of a fiend beat in his breast, would not create a being to suffer and to be miserable forever. Then how much do we wrong that great being who has given us life and this beautiful world, in believing that *he* could perform such an act!

Alas, how has poor, silly man endeavored to dishonor his maker! I turn to a book which I cannot read without being moved by a most righteous indignation, and in it I find the following monstrous statement: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to *everlasting death*. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and *unchangeably* designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increas-

ed nor diminished. Those of mankind that predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath *chosen* Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his free grace and love, *without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, all to the praise of his glorious grace.* * Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, eternally called, justified, adopted, sanctified, saved, but *the elect only.* The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or *withholdeth mercy* as he pleaseth, for the display of his sovereign power over his creature; and so to pass by, and to ordain them to *wrath* and *honor* for their sin, to the praise of his *glorious justice!* " *

I will have no such monster for my God he is the God of the Bible, though it shewings my heart, I will discard both together. I will be the most rebellious spirit in the verse.

*Presbyterian Confession of Faith, Chap. III, Article iv, v, vi, vii.

What a representation of the infinite God ! No wonder that men can conjure up a devil ! Can we love a being who creates us and then damns us to all eternity for the "manifestation of his glory ? who for the glory of his sovereign power and to the praise of his glorious justice, passes us by, and ordains us to wrath and dishonor for our sins" while others equally bad and worse, are exalted to heaven, there forever to exult over us, and to taunt us in our misery ?

"Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." But go the world over, and you will find no human parent so unnatural and selfish as the God here represented. A cold chill runs through every vein as I think of it !

Four-fifths of his children damned, all to the praise of his glorious grace. Of course had the whole been damned it would have added still more to the praise of his grace. But I must confess that I see no grace at all in the affair.—What is grace ? A blessing ; good will ; kindness ; and above all the free unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from him. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

God is a being of infinite mercy ; and if I

read the Gospel rightly, his justice and his mercy are only different aspects of one and the same moral perfection. Yet it is stated in I have quoted that he *withholds mercy* in the praise of his glorious justice. God, a being of infinite mercy, withholding mercy! There is something terrible about it. It may be expressed in two short words, *partial* and *cruel*.

If I am ordained to dishonor and wring the praise of God's justice, the more dishonorable I am, the more I heap wrath upon myself the better I serve him. By lying and swearing and murdering I honor him as much as do the elect saint by prayer and worship. But is not a strange idea that an increase of sin and an endless increase, should add to the praise of his justice?

"Neither are any other redeemed by blood * * * * but the elect only." Then he is the bible purports, the Saviour of the world. The declaration is nothing more than a platitude. He did not come to save the world nor he cannot save even a solitary individual of that class,—they were damned before the foundation of the world—and before they were born were destined to be shut out from all mercy and all hope. A man

sin as much as he pleases and it will be just as well, for if he is one of the elect he will be saved whatever the life he lives, if one of the non-elect, lost, whatever the life he lives!

But I leave this Confession. It is now virtually of non-effect in the church to which it belongs. It no longer inspires fear—no longer bites and tears the souls of men as in times past. Like a fangless, hideous old lion, it is dying out of the world. To-day a thousand spades are digging its grave—so deep that it shall know no resurrection forever!

To return. After God had completed the work of creation, as we are informed in Genesis, he pronounced all that he had made *good*,—therefore he must have loved all because all was good. And if he is an unchangeable being, the same yesterday, to-day and forever, he still loves and will continue to love all forever. We may love an object to-day and to-morrow hate it. We judge of the object as it appears to us in the present, and not as it stands connected with the great plan of providence. We cannot perceive its tendency in the ultimate, nor can we appreciate its bearings indirectly upon the final consummation. If we could for a season possess the attribute of omniscience and the wisdom to comprehend and

look forward into the vast eternity of God, those things which now appear unto us lovely one day and hateful the next, perceiving as we might the full play of their operations, wheel-like in the great machinery of providence, and their effects, ever widening and widening like circles upon water, and pressing toward and gradually touching the grand consummation, those things would no longer appear bad in our sight but altogether good both in their use and results. The Deity when he surveyed the objects of his creation did not pronounce upon their merits as a human being would have done. Before his omniscient eye were spread out the career and destiny of every object to which such terms may be applied as distinctly as was the object itself, together with its effects as commingled with countless other effects extending through the ages and reaching the grand consummation. Not the alone because they appeared so on the morning of the creation, did he pronounce the things that he had made good, but because they appeared good and were good to the eye of omniscience in their ultimate bearings and results.

If it should be said, and it is or has been said in every partialist church in the land, that God loved his children as long as they continued inn

cent, and began to hate them when they became sinners, what then are we to believe in regard to his omniscience and immutability? Was not every action of every man before him? If so, he must have loved and hated us infinitely at the same time. But there could not be a more monstrous absurdity. Infinite love and infinite hate could no more exist together, than could the dazzling light of noon-day and the thick darkness of midnight. Nor could the one follow the other. That which is infinite must exist undiminished forever. If God at the beginning loved man, it must have been with an infinite love, consequently it follows from absolute necessity that he must continue to love every member of the race to all eternity, and whatever he loves will not and cannot be lost.

As our lives and our eternal welfare are in the hollow of his hand, who alone possesses these glorious attributes, if we have a clear understanding and can appreciate the nature of things, we need not, as so many of us most assuredly do, bewail the uncertainty of our destiny and be haunted in our homes and in our places of business by such dismal fears as the best hearts have sometimes experienced.

II.

ORIGINAL SIN.

"And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." GENESIS iii. 17, 18, 19

MAN was made to labor, to struggle, to strive, to suffer, to endure. Such is his destiny. "Soul at ease," falls only from foolish lips. Notwithstanding the idea that lies in the poet's head, and lives in his rhymes concerning Eden and the serpent, we believe that Adam as the representative of his race, was created not for a life of idleness, inactivity and unmingled pleasure, but to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, to suffer, to endure and to be patient. We look on the record of the serpent peering out of his green bower in which he lay coiled with his

cinating eyes upon the sinless Eve, as a mere oriental figure, or beautifully constructed parable, representing by outward object the passion within ; and grave theologians to the contrary, men who are more familiar with the moth-eaten manuscripts of a heathen age than with human nature, we hold that the curse which has come echoing down the ages, is in reality no curse at all, but a blessing to the race.

In earlier days, hedged in by creeds, and too ignorant to doubt, we were often led to wonder why God, the good God, a being perfect in love, unlimited in power and foreseeing all things from the beginning, should have created a world so beautiful, breathed a breath of his own divine life into forms so fair and glorious, merely to bestow on them when created a curse infinitely more terrible than weak passionate man was ever forbidden to utter. We could not reconcile so dark and strange a course with our ideas of the high and holy one. We saw the light of the morning sun resting like a crown of gold upon the hills and flooding the fruitful valleys where the busy reapers, with gleaming sickles in their hands and songs of praise upon their lips, were gathering the harvest of their summer toil. We saw myriads of light-hearted children gath-

ering the crimson fruit of Autumn on the sunn uplands. We heard in thriving cities the dizz whirl of countless wheels, the clang of hammer the throbbing of the iron pulse of the fire-eye engine, the swift, ceaseless workings of the press that is sending light into all the world—we saw the broad bright rivers laden with commerce rolling on through green luxuriant meadow made to blossom like the rose, and adorned with a thousand thrifty homes, and thought, can a world so full of beauty, industry, happiness and prosperity be cursed?

Men write beautifully about what might have been, but for the FALL. Labor, that hand-maid of prosperity, would not have been known; sin would not have been known; nor temptation nor pain, nor sorrow; and above all, death, the fell destroyer of our race, that monster to whose summons kings as well as subjects must yield would never have visited our fire-sides, nor made desolate our homes—but man would have lived on in idleness and joy forever. All this is woven into our theology, and is in part the source of a belief that is as improbable as it is terrible.

But men do not reason into the heart of the subject. They take it rather as a form of faith made for them, and adopt it without the trouble

of thinking, because their fathers before them adopted it. Indeed, few are the men who adopt the common creeds from a thorough self conviction. Probably not one professor out of ten, or a hundred even, really believes in his inmost heart that his race is totally depraved, or that any portion of it will be endlessly miserable.

Now nothing can be more inconsistent, excepting that God decrees endless torment, than that the fall of our first parents was the *cause* of evil in the world—of labor, sorrow, pain and death. There are several reasons to be adduced why such a belief is inconsistent. We shall endeavor to adduce them—but before doing so we wish to say a few words in regard to the fact that the account of the fall in Genesis is merely parabolical, as we have already hinted. Undoubtedly it *is* so, as are many other passages in Scripture, which men are prone to look upon as literal.

We seem to forget that the Old Testament was written three or four thousand, and the New Testament eighteen hundred years ago; and then expressly for a people different from us in all their habits and ways of thinking. The Jews, as well as other oriental nations, were famed for figurative style of speaking and writing. They

were in the habit of conveying the most profound truths, and of embodying the most profound principles, in some figure of speech or simple parable. Their writings that have come down to us bear ample testimony to this fact.

The style and texture of a language become by degrees radically changed, as the people who use it advance. The first language used was made up mostly of imagery drawn from surrounding objects. It was onomatopoeic, for man echoed but the deep and solemn tones of nature. It was abrupt and disconnected, for it was the utterance of each sudden conception and each momentary passion. It was the conveyance of facts not principles—it was empirical, not philosophical. Mind acted only as the interpreter between nature's lives and wonders and the human heart. Words were few, and when the want of them could not be supplied by expression or gesture, figures and illustrations were resorted to as the most terse and direct mode of conveying a meaning—and what source could better supply these figures and illustrations than the vast storehouse of nature with her hills, rivers and trees. Hence nature, instead of books, was man's first library—and as she is filled with poetry, as the winds that float upon her bosom

breathe it, and the skies above glow with it, how could the mind of man be otherwise than poetical?

Now if we would only bear this important fact in mind when interpreting the Bible, especially certain portions of the Old Testament, and no longer endeavor to force every word into harmony with our present use of language, much of the difficulty we meet with would no longer exist.

Turning to the chapter preceding that from which we have selected our text, we find a verse reading as follows:—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Now can we reasonably suppose that there was, in reality, any tree bearing such fruit, or that any such meaning was intended to be conveyed? Would it not be more reasonable to infer that the tree was introduced as a symbol? Does any one suppose that the tree spoken of in another connection, whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations, is in reality a tree? or that Christ when spoken of as a vine, is in reality a vine?

Taking it then for granted, that the tree here introduced is merely symbolical, may we not

suppose that the serpent alluded to in the same connection is symbolical also? Indeed we must suppose so, or else crucify common sense.

The interpretation of the passage into which the tree and serpent are introduced seems to be this:—Adam and Eve were in Eden. They had not yet been tempted, and consequently had not sinned. They possessed human passions and appetites, but they were dormant. The carnal mind was sleeping the sleep that had been upon it from its birth. Only an outward impulse was wanting to awaken it. At length a temptation to wrong doing was presented, as represented by the tree; the human passions and appetites became aroused, and as represented by the serpent, they appealed to the human will—the will yielded, and Adam and Eve fell with the stain of the first sin resting upon their hitherto spotless souls.

This is the root of that monstrous fable of Original Sin, which human device has managed to twist into shape. We have never been able to find the least particle of evidence that this sin descended as hereditary in its effects to others, or that it was the cause of death being introduced into the world. As the first sin, it was a representative, and nothing more. It did not appear

to have poisoned the blood of the pious Abel, for unto him and his offering the Lord had respect. Disease may descend from parent to child, but we have no evidence that sin may do the same. The child of a consumptive parent may be consumptive also on account of the parent, but the child of a thief or a murderer, if surrounded by proper influences and culture, is no more likely to turn out a criminal than a child born of the most pious parents, and he is probably as pure.

It is a common belief that if Adam had not fallen, neither man, beast nor vegetable—in fact nothing that lives in any form whatever—would have known death or decay. It would be strange enough if any thing could be found in the account teaching such an absurdity.

If we take a magnifying glass and look into a tumbler of water, we perceive that it teems with life. The crystal dew drop that hangs trembling on the petal of a flower is a globe inhabited by myriads of living, sensitive creatures. Whoever drinks of water destroys life. But we suppose the defenders of the doctrine of original sin will endeavor to overthrow this objection in about as logical a manner as they attempt to overthrow other objections, by asserting that the liability

to thirst, and consequently the use of water as a beverage, is one of the evils springing from the fall—that but for this Adam would never have tasted of the crystal waters of those beautiful rivers, the Pison and the Gihon. This seems to be an easy way of answering objections, and it is a way that has been adopted from time immemorial by the defenders of original sin and other absurd doctrines which they have managed to attach in some way to the Bible. They have other ways also which are quite as easy of getting out of the dilemma into which they are so often led by the sort of a will-o-the-wisp like course of the arguments they follow. In a recent discourse we said, as we shall say by and by in this, that but for removal by death, the globe we inhabit would in the course of time be incapable of containing its myriad population. A person afterwards said to us that that objection was not valid—that God might for aught we know to the contrary, have added another globe to this, and so on as fast as demanded.—He concluded by saying that we ought not to question the ways of God!

Again—is there any evidence to show that the texture and organization of Adam's body were radically changed by his transgression? If

there is not, then we have no right to presume that it was not the same before as after the fall, and fashioned like the bodies of all his posterity down to the present time. If it was, and he had not transgressed, by what magic charm was the flesh to be preserved from harm by those accidents to which man is liable? Was the law of gravitation to be suspended whenever a human body tottered on the edge of a precipice, to prevent it from falling and being crushed? and when occasion required it, was the specific gravity of water to be changed to that of air, from 828 to 1—so that the sinking man might respire the same as when on dry land? and was the element of fire to forget its nature so far as not to scathe and scar the tender flesh, and crisp the finely strung muscles, when exposed to it by accident? Or did the body of man originally possess those salamander and diving-bell properties which would have rendered it indifferent to the power of the most fearful elements?

That famous verse in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," is often tortured with a false interpretation, and dragged in to prove that the fall of Adam was the cause of physical death. But it proves nothing of the

kind. It has reference to spiritual death, yet it does not show that that even was caused by the fall. Adam was the first who died—Christ was the first who was raised to die no more—and each is here introduced as a representative. The literal meaning of the verse is this: As all shall die as Adam died, so shall all be raised as Christ was raised! If reference was had to the physical body, then it would follow that all bodies are to be made alive again. But the Apostle says in the same chapter, that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”

This verse then proves nothing in favor of the doctrine of original sin, but on the contrary it shatters one of its main pillars. It is asserted that eternal death is one of the consequences of the fall, but how can this be true if all, as the verse declares, are to be “made alive in Christ!”

Again—and we return to the record—God said to Adam, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Many suppose this death to be temporal death, spiritual death and eternal death—and they tell us that by his sin Adam rendered himself and all his posterity liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and

the pains of hell forever. But in this connection we shall speak only of temporal death.

Adam was not informed that by sinning he would become *subject* or *liable* to death ; but the record says, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The penalty was to follow the sin immediately. But Adam did not in this sense, die on the day of his transgression. He lived centuries after, and beheld his children's children growing up around him. Either then temporal death was not the penalty denounced, or the word of God was not executed ; for there was no intimation that it would be delayed for any length of time.

We are told that as an immediate fruit of his sin Adam became mortal. This is a strange idea ! What do we understand by the terms mortality and immortality ? Immortality is that property of life which renders it perpetual—absolutely exempt from death. Mortality on the contrary is that property of life which renders the death of its possessor unavoidable. Hence that which is immortal cannot die, and that which is mortal must die. Now Adam before his transgression was liable to death, or he was not. If he was not, then he was immortal and could not die. It is absurd to speak of the death

of an immortal being—and equally absurd to suppose that an immortal being can be mortal. It is as impossible for God himself to destroy such a being, as it is for him to perform any other action that involves contradiction. The Apostle says in Hebrews, that it is impossible for God to lie. We say that it is impossible for God to destroy an immortal being. Such an act would be contrary to the essential and eternal distinction between vitality and immortality—it would utterly destroy all such distinction. We well know that those who believe in the dark and dubious doctrine of annihilation, contend that the soul may be sinning until it destroys even itself. They deny immortality *subjective*, or in other words they take away its vitality altogether. But if we admit that one soul, even the weakest and most impotent that was ever created, can be destroyed through any agency whatever, reasoning in the same course we must necessarily come to the conclusion that all souls may eventually be destroyed—and the hope that is in us, that sustaining hope dearer to us than any other, an eternal life beyond the grave, becomes vain or falls to the ground, and immortality after all, the product of a vain, cheating delusion.

ange sort of an argument must that be brings us into a belief in *conditional* or *five* immortality, which is very plainly no tality at all.

question therefore whether Adam was l or immortal may be settled by inquiring er he did or did not die. The record de- that he did die. He was therefore mortal, mortal at his death he was mortal when d, and just as liable to death before his resion as after it. When God declared i that he should die, he did not tell him it ecause he had sinned and thus changed ture from immortality to mortality, but se he was *dust*. This is the declaration : ie sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread ou return to the ground ; for"—what, be- he had sinned ? no—"for dust thou art, nto dust shalt thou return !" This passage is sufficient to overthrow the doctrine that came by sin.

it passage in Romans—"As by one man tered into the world, and death by sin ; o death passed upon all men, for that all sinned," does not refer to the death of the as the connection clearly shows, but to al death from which Christ came to save Christ saves no man from physical death,

I now turn to another consideration which is conclusive in its bearings upon this subject.—Science enters the field, and as with a blow from a battle-axe it puts an end to the doctrine of Original Sin. To the curious and searching eye of the 19th century, the old earth has opened her ponderous tomes and revealed their stained pages covered with the mystic symbols of a language as old as time itself; and we are taught the startling fact that this fair globe was rounded into shape countless ages before that era, when we supposed the morning stars first sang together. Geology comes forth with an eye of fire and the voice of inspiration, and pointing toward the scarred bosom of mother earth, tells us that millions of animals died millions of years before Adam was created. There is no possible way of escaping this fact. Who will deny even, in the very face of science, that there are trees now standing in some of the Tropics whose circling grain bears testimony to the fact that they have budded, and blossomed, and sheltered the birds of heaven, for more than *ten thousand years*. Some grave theologians with more zeal than judgment, clinging as tenaciously to their favorite dogmas as they would to the spars of a sinking ship, stoutly maintain that God made those fossils which

have been found in the heart of the living rock. But it is blind assertion merely. They might as well assume that the wrecks which have been found on the shores of unknown and uninhabited islands, were made by God.

President Hitchcock, who is orthodox in the strictest sense, in his late famous work on Geology, after going on to show, honestly and conclusively, that death was in the world long before Adam's fall, comes up boldly to the rescue of his cherished theory. God, says he, foresaw that Adam would sin, and hence that death would enter into the world; it was therefore necessary for the uniformity of his works and the final accomplishment of his purposes that death should be universal, and therefore he commenced on the system that would be introduced by the sin of Adam, so that uniformity is maintained from the first. But where the President gets his authority for this is more than we can tell. It seems to be the very philosophy of imagination and nothing more.

"Now the ground that we take, is that the Scriptures never attribute the bodily death of man to sin as a cause, but to the contrary, that they teach, together with science and common sense, that God made man as well as animals

mortal. Sin may give death its sting, but it is not and never was the cause of the dissolution of our bodies. This is the only ground that will harmonize with geology." (President Stebbins on Original Sin.)

Who can believe that this outward coating, this coil wrought from the common dust, could have been endowed with that attribute of immortality which makes so glorious the ethereal spirit that burns like a deathless flame within—this spirit "that lasts out the fiercest sorrows, the most glowing spiritual joys, and thinks and feels more vividly in the midst of them, while the body is shattered in pieces by great corporeal pangs and convulsions—this spirit that like the *ignes fatui* glides on forever through storm and tempest unquenched!"

We now turn to a consideration of our subject from a more practical point of view. Death appears to be necessary. It is to be attributed, not to man's sinfulness, but to his physical organization. As far as his outward being is concerned man is a mere machine made up of muscles, joints, sinews and arteries, the same as human mechanism is made up of wires, springs, pulleys and cords. We cannot reason concerning it as we do of the soul. We say that death is a solvent and that it cannot reach the

soul because the soul is indivisible, or in other words because it is not composed of parts or grains, but possesses the property of a single atom, and an atom cannot be divided nor destroyed; whereas, the body being composed of a countless number of minute parts is liable at any time to dissolution—at any time to be dissolved under the influence of the great solvent—which is death.

The children of men die at various ages. The tiny infant droops and passes from its mother's bosom like a sweet faded flower, and we are filled with wonder. The strong man is cut down in the full maturity of his powers, is pierced by the keen arrow of the unerring archer like an eagle in mid flight, and again we are filled with wonder the same as when contemplating the untimely death of the infant. We wondered that the infant should have come into the world merely to catch one glimpse of its light—and we wonder that the strong man should have been called from the midst of his usefulness. Sometimes a man lives his four-score years and ten, when he is cut down like a fully ripened shock for the garner—and we are filled with deeper wonder than ever. We wonder that the organs of his body should have retained their tone and power

of action for so long a time—and we are
to exclaim with the poet,

“Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long!”

Yet how forcibly by the last years of the
by the last years of the drooping body,
lesson impressed upon our minds that the
casket was not made to endure forever.
glazed eye, the half-closed ear, the palsied
and the trembling gait, are so many silen
nesses bearing testimony unto the truth th
live in tenements of crumbling dust. I
death be merely a penalty we may well ask
such disparity in its infliction? Why should
infant suffer it while another equally guilt
cording to the creed, is permitted to attain
manhood, enjoying all the advantages of c
and development pertaining thereto—and
is better, by arriving at the age of discreti
able to make peace with God by repen
thereby escaping, in the words of the catech
“the pains of hell forever;” while to the
infant no such opportunity is granted!
may we wonder at this—well may we th
strange that Divine Justice should so infl
penalties on those guilty of the same offen
to be the means of hurrying a part into sce

mending torment, and of gradually lifting a part up into a state of unending felicity! Aside from this we need not perhaps wonder at the difference in the ages at which men die. A child's body presents as many avenues for the entrance of disease as a man's body—and the heart of the one presents as fair a mark for the aim of the grim archer as the heart of the other.

Also, from another point of view death appears to be necessary. When we contemplate the limited extent of the ball that we inhabit, and think of the almost countless generations that have lived and fallen asleep upon its surface as represented in history, we are at once impressed with the fact that were they all living now the earth would be too narrow for their home—that hills and valleys would be flooded as with a mighty sea. Were the ocean alone to give up its dead—that great unmarked sepulchre of myriads of mouldering hearts—the harvests of autumn would be barely sufficient to afford them all food for a single day. Says St. Bernardine the monk, writing in the gloom of his cell—"Lo, six thousand years have passed and the earth is growing old! Thick on her bosom are the graves of her children." And so they are. The very dust that rises beneath our feet was once embodied

in forms of divine beauty—was once moulded into caskets containing bright, breathing, imperishable souls—and it shall fill again the same office. Forms are forever rising in beauty from the dark soil beneath us, and forever in beauty are they returning to the same element. Generation after generation breaks wave like on the shores of time, and dissolves and passes away, making room for succeeding generations. In this connection an immortality on earth, as much as we might desire it, under other circumstances seems repulsive. The very thought of it creates an oppressive sensation. In fancy earth rises before us, not with its green fields and its waving woods, but as a great over-peopled city, besieged by famine, and through whose narrow streets the skeleton hunger, stalks by noon-day, and in whose thronged dwellings grim despair broods in sullen silence. We see men, and women, and children, pale and ghastly with long suffering, hurrying to and fro seeking for food that the thrice gleaned earth refuses to yield, and longing for death, yet cannot die! But this picture is altogether different from that drawn from the fable, which represents the earth, notwithstanding its myriad population, as covered with green fields and delightful groves! Strange inconsi-

tency!—but then all fables are inconsistent, and this the most inconsistent of all—even if it is treasured up with its illuminated margin in the Church's sacred treasury!

Again, if death be in reality a penalty inflicted on account of transgression, why is it made to appear as man's greatest blessing? Why is it represented in Scripture that through its agency the heavy-laden and the poor in spirit shall find relief and rest? Why is heaven—that quiet, beautiful land, where sickness, suffering and sorrow are unknown, where the soul, freed from its present infirm body that is so full of spasms and sharp pains, the body that ever doeth it grievous wrong, shall be clothed upon with a shining robe pure and spotless—why is heaven laid before our eyes in the distance with the keys of its golden gates hanging at death's girdle?

Blessed, thrice blessed penalty, if such indeed be its nature! It is the fruition of man's divinest hopes—it re-unites us with the loved and lost—with the pure and beautiful of every clime and age—it brings us nearer Christ, nearer God, nearer the Source of all glory. The dying are divinely beautiful—and the dead passing into the next room in our Father's house don their snowy robes and starry crowns—and evermore they are saints!

Most persons who believe in the doctrine of Original Sin also believe that there is a local heaven, the home of pure spirits, and a local hell, the home of bad spirits—a place “prepared from the *beginning* for the devil and his angels.”—Now, if death was caused by the fall of Adam, when were these two opposite spheres created? If they were created with the creation of the universe, or from the beginning, as is affirmed, it follows as a matter of course, for he creates nothing in vain, that the Creator had decided that death should be introduced into the world, and that spirits should take their departure from it. If he had so decided, then the fall of Adam resulted from a necessity beyond his own will, and he could not have been held accountable—moreover, instead of marring the divine plan, as is generally supposed, the Fall was but a connecting link in that plan—and tending, in its ultimate results, if God be infinitely good, wise and just, to the best good.

Again, it is supposed by many that all evil, in whatever form it appears, results from the Fall. Yet there is much, indeed there is every thing to show us that evil would have come into the world even if Adam had not transgressed as he did. As we are constituted it seems to be as necessary

for the growth and increasing vigor of the soul, as is the tempest for the purification of the air we breathe, or fire for the tempering of steel to a proper elasticity. Well has a certain poet said :—

"If God no problem set for our unfolding,
Where were the joy, the power, the benefaction
Of toil and faith, and prayer, our spirits molding?
Where were the innocence, without temptation;
Where without freedom were the self-denial?
Where were the triumph, the salvation,
Without the doubt, the danger and the trial?"

Though to the mortal eye the immediate results of evil appear bad enough, we may reasonably suppose that its ultimate results will be for the best good of man and the glory of God ; indeed we are bound to suppose this if we believe in God's goodness, wisdom, and justice. The belief that he has placed the larger portion of his weak, frail children in this world to toil, and suffer, and die, and to be endlessly miserable in the next because they sin in this, he knowing long before they were created that such would be their hopeless lot, seems utterly inconsistent with every attribute that we attribute to him.

John Milton, and he was orthodox enough, especially in his *Paradise Lost*, speaks beauti-

fully somewhere in his writings of the mission of evil. It is in his article on the liberty of the press :—“ Good and evil, we know, in the field of this world grow up together, almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning semblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermingled. * * * * As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice, with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is run for, not without dust and heat. That virtue therefore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure ; her whiteness is but an excrement-

al whiteness." The immortal Spenser describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him with his palmer through the caves of Mammon and the bowers of earthly bliss, that he may see, and know, and yet abstain.

Were there no temptation in the world, there could be no virtue ; were there no sorrow, there could be no happiness ; were there no sickness, there could be no health ; were there no labor, there could be no rest ; or if they did exist they would be unknown and unappreciated. It is by contrast only that they appear blessed. As the darkness of night brings out to the eye the stars that were invisible in the sunlight of day, so are they brought out by their opposites. One who has never been sick a day in his life, can know but little of the true value of health and of a sound body—or of that sensation of exquisite delight, or of those emotions of gratitude to God, that follow after a season of sickness and pain.

Beautiful in this world is the ministry of sorrow and adversity ! It calls forth the most noble and tender traits of our nature. Without it we could have no proper idea of either humanity or love. O humanity ! (to borrow an exclamation slightly altered, from Philocles in the

travels of Anacharsis)—O humanity!—generous and sublime inclination, announced in infancy by the transports of a simple tenderness, youth by the rashness of a blind but happy confidence, in the whole progress of life by the cility with which the heart is ever ready through sympathy to contract attachments! O creature! which resound from one extremity of the universe to the other, which fill us with remorse when we oppress a single human being with a pure delight when we have been able to give one comfort! Pity, sympathy, love, friendship, beneficence, sources of a pleasure that is inexhaustible! If all which was given to man had been a mere instinct, that led beings overwhelmed with wants and evils, to lend each other a reciprocal support, this might have been sufficient to bring the miserable near to the miserable; but it is only an infinite goodness which could have formed the design of assembling together by the attraction of a common love from the trials, adversities and sorrows of the world, and of diffusing through the great associations which cover the earth, that vital warmth which renders society eternal by rendering it delightful!

Thus are we all linked together through the

agency of what we condemn as evils. He who has stayed the progress of a single tear, who has ever checked a rising sigh, and poured balm into one human heart, has done a greater and a nobler thing than to live a whole lifetime of idleness and inactivity. Our hearts are really never at peace unless we are doing good unto others—while the memory of each generous deed lives a joy forever!

Again, how do those influences springing from what we call evils in our short-sightedness, introduce us to the holy solaces of a heaven-born religion. When the heart beats high, and the bounding pulse keeps time to youth, health and vigor, when all our undertakings are prosperous and success seems to come almost unasked for, then we feel not the want of the consolations of religion; but when fortune frowns, when friends desert us, and the world seems cold and dreary, then it is that we feel the superiority of the holy joys, and pleasures, and hopes of religion, over those of dissipation and vanity. Adversity seems necessary that religion may come like an angel of light with her beautiful and tender ministrations. With her glory hanging like a rainbow over his pathway, the Christian comes forth scathed but serene and confident from the dark

land of despair and giants, as did Hopeful and her companion, in Pilgrim's Progress, and leaning on the arm of the blessed Redeemer, enters the broad sunny land of death with an eye sparkling with hope, and looking forward full of assurance to the near possession of the heavenly inheritance!

Labor is said to be a curse, and inactivity a blessing. In Eden our first parents were inactive; but after the direful Fall they were compelled to become laborers on the earth—to bring roses out of the flinty soil—to build great cities on the plain and by the sea shore—and as it were to hew their fortunes out of the living rock. The soft hand became as hard as horn—and the thoughtless brain budded and blossomed with great and stirring thoughts. The sylvan dell and shady grotto were exchanged for roofs made by hands; the mountain torrent, like a broken steed, was made to toil at the ever-turning wheel; trees that were made to stand forever, were felled by the spoiler's hand and fashioned into ships for the ocean, in which the restless mind went forth on voyages of discovery, discovering new continents which otherwise could never have been reached. But for thought and toil—but for the fashioning of those swift ships,

the broad seas which lie between this hemisphere and the land of the Garden of Eden, could not have been crossed, and the primeval solitude of these vast plains and forests would never have been broken by man.

But does all this appear like the result of a curse? Could we pray, with manifestations of the Divine Wisdom all around us, for a change in the order of things? Would we see every city, every hamlet and every dwelling removed from the face of the earth: the iron track of the steed that toils for us and never tires, torn up and cast into the sea; the slender wire, on which we send messages of love and peace, from province to province, swifter than light, cast down; and the mighty ships that carry on commerce between the different countries of the globe, sunk? Would we give up our religion with all the beautiful hopes that cleave to it—our promise of an inheritance by the throne of God, and go back into the station occupied by our first parents, before they were made to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow? If we would not be willing to do so, how can we reasonably look upon all this to which we so fondly cling, as the result of a curse?

It is labor to think, it is labor to acquire knowledge, and yet can such labor ever be looked upon but as a blessing? Which appears to be best calculated to develop the immortal soul, to make it strong, and brave, and glorious—an inactive, thoughtless, uninterrupted life in the midst of groves, flowers and fruits, or a life of great thoughts and noble actions in the midst of the mighty din of iron wheels, the beat of countless hammers and the tread of hurrying feet?

Every struggle, every upward leap of the panting fiery spirit, tells us that it was made for action—eternal action—as was God's universe itself. Go where we will, into the depths of the ocean, into the infinite realms that lie beyond the day-sun and the night-stars, and we shall find that all is action, all is labor. The Eternal himself is the greatest worker of all—the hand that piled up the mountains and laid the deep foundations of the earth is never idle. Quiet tends to stagnation and death. There is no land of quiet, no land of idleness, except in fable. We sometimes think of heaven as such a land; but heaven is too glorious for that.—The spirits there are never idle: our own, with wings half unfolded for a lofty and noble flight,

as they are not. The white and strong feet have passed from our view above the dizzy of the eternal hills, leaving only their coming prints behind for us to follow, are marching bravely, bravely on, while beneath them still rise heights whose tops, radiant celestial light, are invisible, even to the man's unscaled eye!

Heaven is gained only through toil, and pain, and death; and even when, evermore through God's eternal years the enraptured soul continue in toil, dear, holy toil, as it solves, one by one, the problems of the everlasting life!

Therefore let us no longer mourn and repine at the toil, and pain, and death were introduced into the world—no longer wrong the One by calling them the fruits of his curse—but rather let our mourning be turned into joy—our dismal fears into hopes—and our laments into psalms of thanksgiving and praise to him who doeth all things well!

III.

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR.

"Wherefore take unto yourself the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—EPHESIANS vi. 13, 17.

THESE words are stamped with the peculiar genius of their author. They could not be mistaken for the words of any other writer. They have soul and sinew. They live! He was a Reformer. His great heart swelled and surged like a sea. Fire flashed from his eyes. His words darted, winged from his lips. He wielded his logic as a wiry arm wields a battle-axe. His mind like his body was all nerve and muscle. Nearly a pigmy in stature, he stood up like a huge, bearded giant of Error quailed and fell down on their knees before him, stunned by

t and terrific blows. He possessed more the energy of a Luther, more than the wisdom of a Socrates. For years, in the midst of a world of enemies, he upheld the cause of his sister, almost single handed. As sometimes a rock in the ocean, unmoved by the stormy waves that beat against it, bears in its shelter-bosom a few sweet flowers whose ripened seeds the winds bear away and scatter in many places, so, surrounded by that fierce and cruel persecution which had killed the Lord of Life, the noble Apostle cherish and keep alive the germs of hope, faith and liberty which are blossoming and bearing fruit all over the world.

Paul, above all others, could speak of the Christian Armor, for, above all others, he had earned its merits. From the hour that the angel descended it upon him, near Damascus, in that awakening light which shone round about him in such dazzling glory, until his great heart began to beat, it was not laid aside. In the peril by land, and in perils by sea, it served him well. Showers of stones were hurled at him; swords flashed over his head; chains were fastened on his limbs; racks were prepared to torture him; great cauldrons glowed and fiery oil

hissed for their prey; and lions in the bloody arena grated their tusks and scowled as they crouched to spring upon him; but he felt the girdle of his glorious armor tightening round him, and all undaunted, he pressed on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ!"

The language of the Epistle in which the Apostle describes the Christian Armor, is keen and glittering. It seems as if a spirit of Truth and of Power was moving along from sentence to sentence, waving a flaming sword which makes all luminous as it passes. The Epistle was addressed to a class that had once been very wicked. It must have cut like a blade—but the author was too wise to leave a single wound to bleed and fester. Here and there we find a commendatory allusion which was, undoubtedly, as sweet and precious as a drop of golden balm to those for whom it was intended.

The Ephesians had repented of their evil ways—had become converted to the truth—and were striving for the victory and the crown.—But the Apostle had his doubts about their continuing, faithful, to the end. He knew what would be their trials—and he knew the weakness of the human heart. He therefore con-

sidered it his duty to address—to advise—and to encourage them. Hence, the Epistle; in which, first of all, he probed their old wounds and removed the proud-flesh. After which, he proceeded carefully to mention the difficulties with which they would have to contend. Principalities and Powers were leagued against them. Then there were temptations without and within: the blandishments and vanities of the world, that are so liable to dazzle the senses and take the heart captive—and the appetites of the flesh, that sometimes glide like serpents over the walls of the most earnest resolution.—In conclusion, he told them how they must arm themselves. They must procure the Heavenly Panoply. They must put on the whole Armor of God. With this defence they would be safe, even should the whole world combine against them. Cæsar on his throne at Rome, might conquer the world, and bring powerful nations trembling at his feet, but he could not conquer the soldiers of Christ, wearing this glorious Armor.

I sometimes wonder if christians now-a-days have very generally heard of this armor. I ask, because it is not much worn. Perhaps it is not fashionable. Many stand with their loins,

girt about with creeds; having on the breast-plate of self-righteousness; their feet shod with the preparation of the traditions of men; above all, having the shield of election, the helmet of partialism, and the sword of the Saybrook Platform! But this is a poor thing. It is nothing like the True Armor. It is not worthy to be called a defence. It galls the wearer more than it protects him. It should be thrown aside; and yet, it need not be lost. It can be hung up in some museum in the midst of steel visors and linked shirts of olden knights, and in the course of time, as a curious relic of antiquity, it will become as valuable as it is now valueless. True, it has been so often broken and so often mended; so many pieces have been lost, and so many of modern stamp have been added, not to speak of the links that are tied up with strings that it would be quite difficult for the most patient antiquarian to trace its precise history.—However, there are those who stand ready to affirm, after thorough investigation, that some of its most prominent parts were rudely forged soon after the deluge in heathen forges by heathen hands, and worn by heathen warriors. This while it robs the artisan of Geneva of a portion of his glory, proves the antiquity of:

portion of the armor—so if there is a loss on the one hand there is a gain on the other.

I propose now to examine THE TRUE ARMOR. As first in order, I shall take up the Girdle of Truth; and because of its great importance, I shall probably devote to it more time and space than to all the remaining portion of the Armor. This Girdle is an indispensable article. Without it the rest would be useless. It is the first to be put on, and the last to be taken off. It is no silken scarf woven by a lady's hand to be cut through at a blow. There is no blade keen enough or strong enough to cut or to pierce it. How firmly and closely the bright links are knit together! A slender ray of light, purer than crystal, darts through each as they are held up for inspection. They must have been wrought by a skillful workman. But are there no flaws? Let us borrow the battle-axe of Error, and deal a mighty blow. Every link rings, and the whole Girdle is as musical as a chime of bells. But the axe is shattered in our hands. There were wonderful flaws in *that*.

He who wears this piece of armor is strong indeed. Error with all her wiles and stratagems cannot harm him. He is like one in an impregnable fortress. So girded was David

when he went forth to do battle with the Giant Goliath;—so in every age have the champions of the Cross been girded, when they have struggled against fearful odds and come off victors.

He who would overcome the power of error and the force of grey-bearded prejudice, must have truth on his side. He must be always able, always willing, and always ready, to give those who may ask “a reason of the hope” that is in him. For every question he must have a Thus saith the Lord. If so prepared, he will find that there is more virtue in the slender arm of a beardless stripling, furnished with a sling and pebble, than in the corded arm of a giant, wielding a spar from Lebanon. But wo unto him if his loins are girt only with a rope of sand; for if he is a sensible man, in the end shame and confusion will be his part.

It is easy enough for a man to profess to be a Christian Soldier; but the validity of his claim to that glorious appellation will depend upon the nature of the girdle that he wears; while the nature of his girdle will be indicated by the course that he pursues. When we hear a man making frivolous excuses rather than test the soundness of his doctrines, or when we see him scheming, using stratagem, firing silly fibs

through the loop-holes of sophistry, and dodging in and out under cover of his own dust and smoke, we may be tolerably sure that he has not the girdle of truth wherewith to brace his loins. There are hundreds of professed christian captains, even, who are as destitute of this girdle as they are of love for reprobates. Have you never seen a type of this class? He is easily distinguished. He exhibits a fox-like craft. He is suspicious, watchful, jealous. He fears treachery and treason in his camp. He distrusts his soldiers. If they have an idea of their own they must keep it down out of sight, where it can neither bud nor blossom, lest it should bear heresy. In fact, they must hear nothing and know nothing but what falls from his lips. If one straggles beyond the outposts and picks up a scrap of truth, he is disciplined. Every Thus saith the Lord, to be handled, must bear the captain's impress. In ghostly homilies, he exhorts his soldiers to beware, lest Satan in the guise of Universalism which according to his view embraces about every unclean thing named in his vocabulary, should tread upon their heels. Indeed, that is not all! They must not only beware of Universalism, but they must also beware of doctrines which resemble their

own about as much as six resembles half a dozen, the principle difference being in name. So Calvin cuffs Arminius, and Arminius cuffs Calvin!

The true Christian captain entertains no such fears and suspicions. He feels assured that his cause is too attractive to be deserted by those who have espoused it. He is willing that his soldiers should go abroad and hear what others have to say. He wears the Girdle of Truth—and truth begets confidence, charity and love, while it destroys suspicion, jealousy and bigotry. His motto is, "Let truth and error grapple, for who ever knew truth put to the worse in a fair and open encounter!"

Men every where are praying for an increase of light. The earth is vocal with their petitions. Yet, how few are ready to receive it when it comes. Cribbed and caged in the narrow shell that custom and prejudice have encrusted over us, a sea of light may surge about us and we know nothing of it. Sometimes a strong hand comes and shatters our shell and sets us free. We can then drink in of the tides that are swelling around us. Our hearts expand, and we become new creatures—We begin to feel the glorious freedom of an an—

gel, or of a child of God. But this freedom many of our spiritual leaders do not approve of.

I agree with John Milton, when he says that there are undoubtedly, other matters in God's universe to be thought of beyond the discipline of Geneva. Yet, when any new thing comes, no matter how much it may have been longed for, there are those who stand ready to stamp the heel upon it if it comes not in *first* at their own doors, to shake hands with them and to secure their passport and their God-speed!—Solomon, the wise man of old, exhorts us to use diligence, to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures, early and late, but many of our spiritual leaders order us to know nothing but by statute. The Jews had long been praying for a Savior—but when he came their leaders took him and crucified him.

By their fruits ye shall know them. When we hear a professed Christian captain describing in vivid colors to his trembling soldiers at whose finger's ends in big drops is oozing out the little valor that they have, the diabolical passions that he attributes to the good and All-merciful God—when we hear him dwelling upon the infernal tortures of the damned, of those whom

Christ *cannot save* the number being "so fixed," we are very strongly of the opinion that he has not yet buckled on the Girdle of Truth.

Truth always speaks for itself—and the following speaks for itself, too, and well shows in what need some stand of the very important article under consideration. He who conceived it, as it stands recorded in the "New York Observer," must have had a serpent about his loins: "The misery of being lost, how inexpressible! Who can dwell with the devouring fire! Who can lie down in everlasting burnings! Who can endure the gnawings of the deathless worm! It is misery without relief—without hope—without limit—perpetually increasing, and yet with power perpetually strengthened to bear accumulating wo! Oh, might hope enter this dark mansion—might its guilty inmates indulge the prospect of annihilation at any period ever so remote—might some ponderous rock grind them to powder! * * * * * What a luxury! * * * But when they cry, How long? And are answered, "FOREVER!" and when they again raise their cry, "How long?" and the pit answers, "FOREVER!"—* * * When their perpetual blasphemies provoke anew the divine endurance, what have they to anticipate as the reward of their deeds but in-

dignation and anguish, tribulation and wrath ! But what a faint image can we have of misery to be endured forever, to increase forever, and to be borne as the just demerit of accumulated sins forever ! As I draw near in *imagination*, and hear the blasphemies of the pit, the accent breaks upon me—"O, *that God would die !*" But he is the living God, and to fall into *his hands* will finish the soul's despair !" From the bottom of my heart I pity the man who wrote this horrible description. With that faith of his, and that dark, strong imagination hovering like the fire-eyed Dante's on the very edge of "the burning marl," I wonder that he is not a howling, gibbering maniac chained in some mad-house. Through the long nights, as he lies upon his couch and thinks of God, of eternity and of *friends gone on before*, with that intense imagination wide awake, do not the fearful shrieks of "the lost" as they rise and fall in some whirling storm of fire, ring in his ears ! and does he not still hear, round his bed, creeping up in the darkness from millions of charred lips, that low, hideous murmur : "*O, that God would die ?*"

Alas, there are too many such soldiers in the Christian Army. But never one of them goes

mad;—there is not a case on record. And yet their doctrine, when believed and *realized*, is as fatal as the bite of a rabid dog. No, no, *they* do not go mad; the deadly virus shoots only through the veins of the weak-minded and tender hearted ones, who look up to them and *believe*, when these soldiers, lacking so sadly the girdle of truth, describe their great captain and strike with the fangs of a wicked imagination! Some deluded father bares his throat to the cold blade; some poor, frantic mother strangles her sleeping babes; some simple girl, young in years, is carried to the mad-house; and these soldiers wear the thick and blushing honors of the church, for handling skilfully the word of God, and for presenting the doctrines of Jesus, that mild man of sorrow, *powerfully* and *effectively*; as if the word of God and the doctrines of Jesus had any thing to do with the matter! I have read carefully the early history of Christianity; I have read that John was as a bright and shining light, and that Paul was mighty indeed; but I have yet to read of a Christian in those days being made otherwise than exceedingly joyful by a vigorous presentation of the doctrines of the Gospel!

I take from my shelf a volume of sermons

written by one of the most celebrated divines that this country has produced, a man who could stand in the pulpit for hours and portray the horrors of an endless hell to a shrieking, wailing congregation, without a gesture and with a face as cold and passionless as marble. I read these sermons, and the impression is forced upon my mind that the author in writing them depended more upon the spasms of a distorted imagination than upon the gospel. His thoughts cling apparently to the brink of the hell that he paints as fondly as bees to a flower laden with honey. As often as once in every other page, and from the frequency of the occurrence I should judge that it was his peculiar delight, he draws up from the fiery pit that he has made, a sinner scorched and blackened, and holds him up transfixed on the point of a grim trope, quivering and cringing, for inspection! My taste is disgusted and my heart shocked.—Poor indeed of his God and of human nature must have been the opinion of the man who could write thus—and yet has not our church literature for the last two hundred years been in a great measure made up of such writings? The Doctrine of Election like a huge leech has been sucking away so long at the life-blood

of the Calvinistic branch of the Church, that it is now nearly torpid. I speak of it, because as I peruse the above mentioned volume, it slowly uncoils its slimy length still moist with tears and blood, and wriggles in the warmth of an indignant glance. It will never do any more harm. Its days are nearly numbered. While Edwards and Emmons lived how it was petted! It was their girdle—as well as their shield.—With *such* a piece of armor on Edwards could say: “The saints in glory will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are, yet this will be no occasion of grief to them, but of rejoicing. They will not be *sorry* for the damned, it will cause no *uneasiness* and no dissatisfaction to them, but on the contrary, when they see this sight, it will occasion *rejoicings* and excite them to *joyful praise!*” And Emmons could say:—“When they (the elect) shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others, *who are by nature and perhaps by practice no worse than they*, it will give them more a sense of the wonderfulness of God’s *grace* to them. Every

time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and *admiring* sense of the grace of God in *making them so to differ*. The sight of *hell torments* will *exalt the happiness* of the saints forever. The happiness of the elect in heaven will in part *consist in witnessing the torments of the damned in hell; and among these may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives and friends on earth!*" Surely, this is terrible to come from Fathers in the Christian Church—men who above all others should have their loins braced with the Girdle of Truth. Though there are at the present day, in the more advanced portions of the country, but few preachers who dare put forth such barbarous sentiments boldly, well knowing that they would be repelled by public opinion, the very germ of them is still retained in the Calvinistic Confession of Faith (that great cess-pool of error,) and in Calvinistic Catechisms, and every preacher of the persuasion is *supposed* to nod assent. But this whole system of Calvinism is soon to be struck with blows under which it will reel and crumble. The Girdle of Truth is being buckled on in high places, and the mightiest of the Brotherhood will turn ere long and smite with gauntleted hands!

O, would that the holy angels of the Lord of Glory might come this day, and bind with glowing hands round the loins of all, this glorious Girdle; that all might know and feel that "God is Love!" that his tender mercies are over all his works; and that he "is not *willing* that *any* should *perish* but that *all* should come to repentance!"* How beautiful then, would the earth become! "The new altars that would rise in this valley of tears, would be surrounded with contentment and peace; its rites would be tranquil festivals; its adorations would be fraternal rejoicings; and felicity would inhabit its sanctuaries!"

The second piece enumerated by the Apostle as belonging to the Christian Armor, is the Breast-plate of Righteousness.

As a preface to this head, I ask what is righteousness? This is a difficult question to answer, now-a-days. The term itself has come to be a great verbal vagabond in our language, suspected by all honest men of all christian denominations, so often has it been worn by arch-hypocrites, and so often has it been used as a sort of scape-goat to bear away the meanest kinds of sin. How low and miserable some-

* Peter III. 9.

times are its offices; serving as a cloak for iniquity, as a screen to hide a corrupt heart, as a passport to admit rogues into the company of honest people! Oh, how degraded is the term that once glowed on the lips of the sainted Paul! Could the Apostle stand on earth to-day and see how it is used, how under its guise numbers fit only for parti-colored garments and jails have crept up into the church and into high places therein, bringing shame and reproach upon the Cause, I dare presume that he would banish it into everlasting exile. It has worked injury to all denominations.

Half-way between Apostolic righteousness and down-right hypocrisy, there is a kind of article which I hardly know how to name or to classify. I cannot speak of it as I have spoken of the term above. Those who possess it, and it is possessed by many of all classes of christians, are very generally men of fair and honorable standing in the world, as the world goes; men who neither lie, cheat nor steal. *They* call it righteousness, while others sometimes add the little word, *self*; but it is not the genuine self-righteousness, not the kind really that I alluded to in speaking of the false armor. It is one of the meanest and most thin-skinned ele-

ments that ever entered into a man's conception of religion. "Stand back for I am holier than thou," has by far the advantage of it. How shall I describe it! It is all form. It has no more heart than a shell. It is so dry that it may be said to rattle. Generally it takes the place of the religion that is put off and on with the go-to-meeting coat. Those who wear it make long prayers, but longer bills; wear sad faces, but make sadder hearts; groan loudly but make the poor groan louder! They deny the blind beggar a penny, and send him away with a blessing! They give the shivering wretch freezing at the door, *wholesome* advice instead of a coat. It never enters into their belief that there is sometimes more virtue in a loaf of bread than in a long prayer; and more benefit to be derived from a bank bill than from a ghostly exhortation. Alas, that there should be at the present day so many such—christians!

By righteousness, speaking of it under the figure of a breast-plate, the Apostle meant spotless integrity of character; purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity to the will of our heavenly Father; justice, honesty and virtue, with holy affections; in short, he meant true religion. It is of the first importance to the

Christian Soldier to be upright. A conscience void of offence toward God and man will inspire him with confidence and valor in the hour of combat. He who wears this beautiful piece of armor will live what he preaches, and preach what he lives. The darts of malice, or of ridicule, may be hurled at him—the jealous may brew the venom of their slander—the wicked may lay their snares—but they cannot harm him. He lives in the sunshine of a spotless mind!

Far different is the breast-plate of the False Armor; the Breast-plate of Self-righteousness, that is so much worn at present in the Church, and that was so popular of old among the Pharisees.

The Soldier who wears this spurious article will appear very earnest and devout. He will make great professions. He will boast of his saintly chivalry, and of his heavenly knight-hood. He was selected to be one of God's vessels before the morning stars together sung.—He has but to open his mouth and inspiration flows. He is composed of better material than our common humanity. He may be easily distinguished. He builds up a beautiful palace for the saints, with golden doors and soft couch-

es, and gives the poor reprobates pits, dungeon and darkness. He delights all who are as confident as himself, by asserting that each of the Chosen, who is *humble* here, has his coach and six waiting to receive him at the pearly gateway of the celestial city; while he fills the hearts of the doubtful with terror, by describing the horned and hoofed firemen that feed with bristling forks, the glowing cauldrons that boil and seethe and open their liquid jaws, wreathed with sulphurous flame, for the naked and cowering souls of the doomed and damned! From the depths of his heart he rejoices that God has made him, and the faithful, so to differ from the rest of mankind! The presence of one of the unfavored in heaven—of one of that class which according to his opinion embraces by far the largest portion of mankind—would utterly disgust him. If such were going to heaven he would not wish to go!

Once upon a time as I have heard or read, the Champion of the Gospel, as he styled himself, ever vigilant and never *slumbering* yet a devout believer in the divine efficacy of a *Nay* rose up, girded on his armor, and went forth to call sinners to repentance. He passed from city to city, and from village to village, per-

forming great things. At length he entered a town on the shore of a broad and beautiful Lake, where a few earnest warm-hearted men and women, believing in the doctrines of Universal Grace, had formed themselves into a society. Here was a great work for him to do. These heretics, for so he was pleased to style them, must be disbanded and scattered. He waged war upon the shepherd of this little flock, who was a man of sterling qualities as none could deny. To crown all, on some occasion, perhaps in the heat of controversy, he prayed unto God to strike this shepherd dumb forever, if such and such things were not true. It must have been a most blasphemous prayer, and it is hard to believe that it was uttered, but so the account runs. He on whom this was denounced, had long been troubled with a pulmonary complaint, and for a season he almost entirely lost his voice. Many supposed until the man's voice became again as good as it ever was, that this affliction was the result of that wicked prayer! Indeed, I received a letter about a year ago from a man living a thousand miles away, asking if there was really any foundation for the report! The great champion passed on with renewed zeal, boasting how he

had brought down the curse of God upon a vile heretic, and the story rung from Maine to Georgia. But by and by strange reports began to get abroad; and at last it was clearly proven that there could be but few sinners in the world, if any, who stood less in awe of the hell-fire that he had preached so scorchingly about, than this great champion himself!

“Alas, hypocrisy and nonsense
Had got th’ advantage of his conscience!”

I have introduced this account to show how the false breast-plate is sometimes mistaken for the true. We shall do well to guard against it. We come next to the Christian Sandals. Have “Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of Peace.” This piece of armor is peculiarly the Christian’s. Whatever contradiction there may be in the use of terms, it may be said of the Christian Soldier that he wages the war of Peace. He destroys his enemy by making him his friend, he overcomes evil with good. In all God’s universe, in the armies of nations, in the legions of human conquerors, there is no soldier like him! Wherever he goes he is a harbinger of Peace. “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” When

we see a true Soldier of the Cross, we see a herald of peace, a messenger of glad tidings of good things. He comes not to destroy, but to restore—not to make wailing widows and desolate orphans, but to bind up the bruised, to comfort the broken-hearted and to wipe away the tear of sorrow! His approach is not announced by the roar of murderous cannon and the sad moans of dying victims;

“But like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
We hear once more the voice of Christ say, “Peace!”
Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War’s great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of LOVE arise.”

His field is the sacred arena of Home. There he conquers, and there he wears the bays of victory. By the still fireside, alike in the palace and in the hovel, he plants the sweet flowers of affection and over the family-altar arches the unfading bow of hope! His is a religion that flows through the heart out into the world from the deep fountains of a confiding Faith.—He breathes from his lips like sweetest, holiest music to the soul that is stricken, some gentle, hopeful saying bequeathed to his lambs by the Redeemer. With a love-light round his brow

and a gleam of heaven in his eye, he passes into the midst of human despair and suffering. His is the soundless tread by the couch of pain—his, the midnight vigil—his, the gentle hand that presses the throbbing brow—and his the blessed ministrations and cheering words that make sickness almost lovely and death holy. His life glides on to the music of love—and peace lives on his lips and sparkles in his glance. He hopeth in all things, trusteth in all things, and is always confident. Brave to do and to dare in the midst of crime and misery, sorrow and death, he is an evangel of Christ—a holy faith embodied, a serene hope visible to the eye! Down through the cycles of time, like music down a glowing chord, to his earnest heart come the words of the fire-eyed Prophet: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me—because the Lord hath appointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound!” Catching the strain, and fired with its spirit, how glorious and stirring are his words as he proclaims the coming victory: “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even

the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death!" Over all shines the golden radiance of "the bright and morning star!"

There are many who call themselves true Soldiers of the Cross whose title to that glorious appellation we doubt, because we do not see upon their feet the Sandals of Peace. They are not messengers of glad tidings of good things. "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping!" Wherever they go there is lamentation and weeping. Their doctrines make the Christian world morose and harsh, and cause division, bigotry and intolerance. They have turned the divinest faith into a dreadful fear, and hope and joy into ghastly spectres.— With their descriptions of the Divine Character, and of diabolical tortures, they have stupified or hardened the gentlest hearts and chilled the warmest emotions. They have in numberless instances produced delirium and hopeless insanity. From the bosom and endearments of home they have torn the beautiful and the gentle to wear out a weary life in the cell of the howling maniac. They are heralds of despair and

not of peace. I do not exaggerate. These are the words of sober truth. But I will let one of the number—one who stands head and shoulders above nearly all the others—bear witness to what I have said, as far as his own mind is concerned. I believe that he is an honest man and that he speaks from his heart. Here is his testimony—and it is dark, terrible:

“That the immortal mind should be allowed to jeopardize its infinite welfare, and that trifles should be allowed to draw it away from God, and virtue, and heaven;—that any should suffer forever—lingering on in hopeless despair, and rolling amidst infinite torments without the possibility of alleviation and without end: that since God *can* save men, and *will* save a part he has not purposed to save *all*;—that on the supposition that the atonement is ample, and that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all and every sin, it is not in fact applied to all:—that, in a word, a God, who claims to be worthy of the confidence of the universe, and to be a being of infinite benevolence, should make such a world as this—full of sinners and sufferers;—and that when an atonement had been made he did not save *all* the race, and put an end to sin and woe forever. * * *. I have read, to

ne extent, what wise and good men have written. I have looked at their theories and explanations. I have endeavored to weigh their arguments—for my whole soul pants for light and relief on these questions. But I get no farther; and in the distress and anguish of my spirit, I confess that I see no light whatever.

I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world; why the earth is strewed with the dying and dead, and why man must suffer to all eternity. I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's *ease to my burdened mind*, nor have I an explanation to offer or a thought to suggest, which would be of use to you. I trust other men—as they profess to do—understand this better than I do, that they have not the ANGUISH OF SPIRIT which I have, but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and sufferers; upon death-rooms and grave-yards; upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer forever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens—when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger, when I see the great mass of them wholly concerned, and when I feel that God only

can save them, and yet he does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark—dark—dark to my soul—and I cannot disguise it.”*

A man with such a faith can give but little consolation to others in life's dark and trying hours. He wears not upon his feet the Sandals of Peace.

Next in order comes the Shield of Faith.—This is a very beautiful part of the armor. It can be seen at a great distance for its surface glows like a star. It was burnished by the angels in heaven. To the Christian soldier it is a joy forever. It stays his heart and gives him courage. It may be said to light the passage of his blade. With it he cannot be cast down. Such a shield Christian and Hopeful bore before them through the grim land of giants and by the dark castle of Despair! It is engraved with the symbols of a celestial language, and it bears the figure of an angel pointing toward heaven. When smitten it rings like a chime of morning bells.

O thou who art heavy laden, who hast endured sore trials, who hast come out from under the shadow of death, who hast felt the throes of a great sorrow—how eagerly with thy

* Dr. Albert Barnes—Prac. Sermons, pp. 128—126.

pale, trembling hand hast thou grasped this blessed Shield, and pressing it to thy yearning, throbbing heart, hast turned thy tearful eyes toward heaven and beheld the serene beauty and repose of the bright land of glory—the haven of eternal rest!

How like the stars is the Shield of Faith!—Behold yon star, burning so calmly far away in the blue ether. As we gaze upon it its golden circle seems to expand and to present infinite depths of beauty. We fancy it a gate of heaven, and through its shining bars we behold scenes of ineffable delight, and through its opening vista floats the enraptured soul on tides of light and on rivers of refreshment, like a snowy-sailed barque freighted with golden hopes. That star shone with its mild radiance in the mellow twilight of Eden. Its light gilded the stranded ark on Ararat and silvered the wing of the snowy dove. It inspired the heart of the sweet Psalmist of Israel as he mused by night among the shadowy hills. It hung in serene beauty above the cross on Calvary, and lighted the pathway of the weeping Marys to the door of the sepulcher. Still it shines on with the same calm and earnest light—a type of eternal constancy. “Thus saith the Lord,

which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waters thereof roar ; the Lord of Hosts is his name : if these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me forever. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee ; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord." How like the Shield of Faith, that never grows dim, but glows on forever and forever, telling of a re-union of love and friendship on a higher, holier scale of a re-union that shall be as permanent as the numbers of eternity, binding in one wreath the fruits of the past with the blossoms of an endless future !

There are many who profess to wear the Shield of Faith, and yet have no hopes of a conquest. They have enlisted under a captain of limited powers and capacities. They have but little confidence. Though he tells them that he came to destroy the works of the great enemy of man—that every knee shall eventually bow, every tongue confess, and death itself be no more, they do not believe him. They have too

much faith in the power of Satan. They pray long and vehemently for the salvation of all mankind, yet they are certain their prayers will not be answered. They do not pray with faith. Satan is to gain the victory—though God, the infinite God, *wills* that it shall not come to pass, and Christ and man struggle against it. God wills that all men shall be saved, nevertheless Satan is to lead by far the greater portion of our race into endless captivity, and keep alive forever the fires of hell and the torments of the damned. Aye, time without end is he to stir the unquenchable fire and the boiling pitch, in very sight of the saints, down in the infernal valleys that stretch away from the gates of heaven into endless night. Universal goodness, love and peace shall never triumph, but forever like a foul blot shall hell mar the beauty and harmony of God's universe, and forever shall the Fire-Eyed Fiend, with his hoary horns and his cloven hoofs, his forked tongue and his barbed tail, his broken fetters as trophies of victory clanking round his mighty limbs, rage up and down the groaning space, devouring the souls of the children of our heavenly Father!

Alas, these soldiers have been cheated! Their shield was not forged in the Furnace of Divine

Love. It is a poor thing, indeed. It is a counterfeit palmed off upon them by the enemy. When will their eyes be opened!

The HELMET OF SALVATION comes next in order. A figure, it implies, or rather represents, the great Doctrine of Salvation. This is the most glorious doctrine under heaven. It is the ultima Thule of all other noble doctrines. It is *the* doctrine of the Bible; to unfold it and carry it forward, was the Bible given. Through the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament it runs like a silver thread on which a suffering man may hang his hopes—or like a sun-beam to give light and sight to the eyes that are blind and to warm and cheer the hearts that are chilled. Christ came to save the world—salvation was the object of his mission—for salvation he lived, for salvation he died. We speak of Salvation Universal. I can conceive of no other with the name of Christ. Partial salvation—the salvation of an individual here and there—if there be no other—destroys the world's Savior, and robs God of his integrity. The true salvation—the great salvation—is unlimited—it is for all time, for all space, and for all souls. It contemplates the entire and eternal destruction of sin and death. "There is no

my so formidable, no tyranny so bitter, no fetters so heavy and galling, no prison so dark and dismal, but they shall be vanquished and disarmed—the unerring dart shall be broken, the prison pulled down and razed!” Such a salvation only is worthy of the Infinite God and of his Immaculate Son.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION is absolutely necessary. It underlies the character and the integrity of the Supreme Ruler. His throne and the stability of His Moral Government rest upon it. God is a being of infinite Perfections; therefore He must desire and must have absolute order and harmony in his realms. Every immortal mind is a part of the working power of the moral universe. When all minds shall co-operate, shall work in unison, directed by the same Controlling Wisdom, then order and harmony will prevail, and the Kingdom of Heaven will be established. But not until then. An entire loss of one even, of these moral forces would render the consummation of perfect Order and Harmony utterly impossible. Nothing can be perfect without all of its parts. No more could the moral universe lose a mind, than could a watch or an engine lose a wheel, and *move on harmoniously*. How absurd then is that sys-

tem which, while it represents God as a being of infinite perfections and of infinite power, forces the idea that two-thirds of the moral, working power of the universe shall be entirely lost to that which God desires, or in other words thrown into everlasting confusion and discord! According to this theory, Evil secures a preponderance of power—triumphs over the Omnipotent God—and builds up a hell, an almost boundless region, while heaven shall be only as a grain of golden dust clinging to some one of its outer gates, ever shadowed and blackened by the great smoke of Torment. In other words, and to borrow in part the language of another, God is made to appear as having a little, narrow heaven, where he will gather a few of his children, whining and dawdling out a life of eternal indolence, made tolerable only by witnessing with a savage delight the tortures of their friends and kindred in the Infernal Regions; and Satan, as having a great, wide hell, full of men, demons and torments lasting forever and forever. So, while God creates, Satan destroys: hell is made populous, and paradise in comparison a wilderness.

But how does this system correspond with Scripture Testimony? God is not *willing* that

any should perish. 2 Peter, iii. 9. God is righteous. Ezra ix, 15. The desire of the Righteous is *only good*. Prov. xi, 23. I desire mercy and not *sacrifice*. Hosea vi, 6. He will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim. ii—4—6. It shall come to pass, in the place where it was said unto them, 'Ye are not my people,' there shall it be said unto them, 'Ye are the Sons of the Living God. The children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint themselves **ONE HEAD**.' Hosea. i. 10. The Creation shall be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. viii. 21. Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine! Thou Reignest over All; and in Thine hand is Power and Might, and in Thine hand it is to make Great, and to give strength unto All. 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 12. The God of heaven shall set up a **KINGDOM**, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom

shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. Dan. ii, 40. Kingdom ruleth over all. Ps. ciii, 19. Kingdom of the Most High is an Everlasting Kingdom, and All Dominions shall Serve Obey Him. Dan. vii, 27. He is of one mind and who can turn him? and what His soul sireth, even that HE DOETH. Job xxiii, 1. The Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying, So as I have Thought, so shall it come to pass I have PURPOSED, so shall it stand. Is. xiv. Yea, I have spoken it, I will also Bring to Pass. I have purposed it—I will also Do I Hearken unto Me, ye *stubborn-hearted*, that *far* from righteousness: I will bring near Righteousness; it shall not be afar off, and Salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel, My Glory. Is. xlv, 10.

“Can liar make

God lie? Or cheat his neighbor of his soul?

No! God's Salvation waiteth not on man's

Weak will or ministry; nor man's perdition

Upon his brother's hatred or neglect.”

Alas, in the very face of these glorious sublime Declarations, there is many a professed Christian Soldier who does not believe in

Great Salvation—who does not wear upon his brow the beaming Helmet of Salvation! Instead of declaring unmitigated and ceaseless war upon Satan—until his works shall all be destroyed, until every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess, he holds out the advantages of a compromise. If he can have the Elect, Satan may take the remainder. Indeed he holds out to the grim Arch-Fiend flatteringly that the remainder—composing by far the largest portion of mankind—are his beyond all hope of a rescue. So it may be said that while he professes to be a Christian Soldier, he yields before the battle the victory to Satan—provided, always, that he can escape himself, and take his circle of particular friends with him. Poor coward! His heart has no core! He procured his armor from some other armory than that of the Divine Love—his commission from some other than the great CAPTAIN OF SALVATION!

How entirely different, how glorious, is the Soldier who wears the True Helmet! He is the man of large Faith arching over a warm, a generous, a universal heart! In speaking of him, and in closing this head of the Discourse, I cannot do better than to use the sentiments of another.

er writer, slightly altering his language. the True Soldier, has not fallen into the gross error of believing that among men some are lost, whatever they may do not to lose themselves, and others saved, God charging himself, so to speak, to sanctify them, without their taking any care about it; he believed Paul when he declares to Timotheus that God wills that all men shall be saved; he does not think that God makes distinction of person, but puts an invincible difference between man and man; he does not think that there are privileges in Christianity and that the judgment of God varies, while He has declared that He will judge each according to his works; and when he demands of Nature or Revelation, when he interrogates himself, or when, if I may dare to speak, he interrogates God, every when he discovers proofs which demonstrate, every when he receives replies which attest these two magnificent and simple truths, that always and everywhere man is man, and always and everywhere Christianity is Christianity. Under these resemblances, profound and unaltered exist between us all. Resemblance of creation. 'Have we not all one Father?' said a prophet.

* From the French of Athanase Coquerrell.

'God made of one blood all the human race,' said an apostle; resemblance of sin: 'He who says he has no sin lies, and the truth is not in him;' resemblance of misfortune: 'Man born of woman is of short life and full of trouble;' resemblance of death: 'By one man death came into the world, and came upon all men, because all have sinned;' and of worship: according to St. Paul, 'there is but one Lord, one baptism, one faith;' and of the tomb: all are dust, and all shall return to dust; finally of immortality, since 'the spirit returns to God who gave it,' *** and when all things thus are similar between us, shall not salvation be so also? Alike feeble, alike sinners, alike mortal, should we not be alike saved! Exposed to the same shipwreck, should we not land at the same haven? Clothed with the same sorrows, should we not nourish the hope of the same reunions? Reassure yourselves, servants of Jesus; 'this great joy is for all people,' and one of the last words of Christ to the founders of the Church was—Announce the Gospel to every living creature. O! let us guard ourselves then from ever falling into the deplorable inconsistency of these fanatics, who open to all one Hell without opening to all one Heaven. Let us not put Moses in opposition to

Jesus, and if we believe Moses who speaks of one Creation, one Fall, one Death, let us also believe Jesus who has promised us, that 'whoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, and who speaks only of one redemption and one immortality.

Only one Piece of Armor more is now required to complete the list : the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Without this Sword the Christian Soldier is weak indeed. His enemies may overcome and defeat him in every engagement. He must go often to the great armory of the Divine Oracles. He must combat Error with Scripture and not with human devices. He who goes to Augsburgh, to Geneva, or to Princeton, for his sword, will make but a feeble defence. It is perhaps owing to this, the want of the true blade, that there is so much artful dodging, so much deep scheming and so much sneaking in ambush in the Christian ranks ; and that so many professed Soldiers of the Cross are mere advocates, pleading the cause of religion as a feed lawyer pleads the cause of a client, with all manner of quibblings, sophistications and illusions. It is better to wield the True Weapon awkwardly than a false one skillfully ; for while one that is false leaves ugly scars

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and wounds that bleed forever, when it does not kill, the True pierces like a flash of light deep unto repentance, and carries life upon its glittering point instead of death, instead of scars, instead of ever bleeding wounds.

For ages the church has been imposed upon, cheated and victimized, by an army of mental artisans, tinkers and grinders; the first class palming off upon unsuspecting soldiers of the cross their wares, their divine cutlery made with hands and bearing the stamp, "*Warranted to cut*;" the second standing ready to mend broken weapons; and the third to grind out knicks and set edges! But Othello's occupation is nearly gone. There will be but few more weapons *made* for the church—and so after a season, there shall be no more either to mend or to grind. Christians everywhere are beginning to discover that there is but one weapon of the true stamp, and that is the SWORD of the SPIRIT, the WORD of God. This is well, for at the rate matters have been going on for centuries Satan would never be vanquished and slain. Through the mighty bars of his iron visor he grins at all attacks made upon him with the weapons that have been so much in use. But woe unto him when the True Sword descends upon him—for

then he staggers and his grinning is turned howling. That powerful blade, defying and wear and the rust of ages, shall yet destroy !

By his weapon, then, we may distinguish true from the false Soldier. Examine his sword if he has one. If he is destitute, and carries in his hand, instead, a confession of faith, a catechism, or a tract, he is most certain from being above suspicion. Ask him if he has received a commission from the great Captain of Salvation.

Such is the CHRISTIAN ARMOR—placed in contrast with the *false* and the worthless.

But there ARE many in the Christian world who wear no armor at all, good or bad. Defenceless people are called *Nothingarians* because they have nothing, care for nothing, know nothing, beyond Politics and the "invaluable dollar." Two ideas in regard to religion never entered their heads. Were they to be converted at all they would as soon shout for Cæsar as for Paul, and never know the difference. Their position in the religious world is in some respects similar to the position of ciphers in the family of figures. Standing by themselves



express nothing, but placed in connection with others, they help to make up a round number in the Christian census! Going to meeting they consider tedious, and sermons, "flat, stale and unprofitable;" so they stay away and read the newspapers, while they vary their sabbath dullness with groans and sighs that are not of the spirit. They would walk a mile to turn a penny, or ten in a thunder-shower, to hear a stump-speaker discuss the Policy of the Administration! They are lighter in the Kingdom of our Lord than the chaff that the wind scatters. The weight of the Christian Armor would crush them. Poor, weak vessels—I wonder if they will know enough to knock when they reach the door of heaven!

. I V .

FEAR, A WANT OF JOY, DEADNESS AND SKEPTICISM IN THE CHURCH.

“Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.”—LUKE. ii, 10.

“**F**EAR NOT!” These words were the first that heralded our Savior. The angel who uttered them must have understood human nature—must have known that the heart of man cannot be won, and will not receive Truth, while under the withering and blasting influence of Fear.

Fear is the tyrant's lash and the soul's fetter. It is the oil that feeds the flame of Despotism; the serpent that fastens upon the wing of the eagle; the dragon in the Temple of Liberty. It comes in all forms & it wears all guises. Wherever its shadow falls there you find the abject coward and the cringing slave. It enables the few to lord it over the many. With its aid the despot plants his heel upon the necks of millions of

his race. It is man's greatest curse. It dwarfs his intellect, and deadens his spiritual life; while it gives him the low, retreating forehead of the brute, and the sleepless cunning of the idiot.

Fear—fear of a cruel God—the most hopeless, the most deadly fear of all—how has it fed the human brain with its distilled poison—hissing through the darkness of a sin-stricken world, by day and by night, in the hour of health and in the hour of death, those two words Satan and Hell! How has it conjured up and given form and substance to demons, witches, imps and goblins, to worry and torment the children of men! And how has it been used like a rod of iron to beat and scourge the soul of man reeking into the Kingdom of Heaven!

We, the strongest and the best of us, may fear the human tyrant who leans hard upon our fortunes, who brings us low and shackles us with chains, and still be hopeful and cheerful, for we know that his power over us will not last forever, that the time will come when his cruel arm shall rest cold and nerveless in its coffin.—But to fear him, the glance of whose burning eye pierces like a tongue of fire through all regions and all space, Him over whom death has no power, but whose wrath shall follow us

down into the cold grave and drag us forth to suffer torment forever, is awful beyond the conception of those who have never experienced its crushing and blasting influence. I have seen beings maddened and convulsed by such a fear. I have heard them long for annihilation—I have seen them look forward with a fearful joy to the bier and the pall as harbingers of an eternal sleep. This terrific fear has at once desolated and darkened the earth. "It was this that in older days drove the ascetic to the desert; that made nature and the face of his fellow hateful to him; that filled his ferocious solitude with unearthly terrors; that trained, instead of a saint, a theological savage; it was this which aroused religious wars; which infused into these wars a spirit of fury; that demonized humanity; that made a most merciful nature a stranger to mercy; it was this which brought man in nearest resemblance to that vile and wicked being whom his worst and blackest passions had formed; it was this that tore out the heart of flesh and put in its place the heart of stone—a heart which no appeal could soften, and which no appeal could move. It was not until human affections were deadened or fossilized by this fear, that there was a heart with-

but mercy. I believe it to be quite capable of proof, that no mere worldly wickedness has ever cursed mankind with so many sufferings, that has ever heaped on them so many cruelties; and made them agents of cruelties in return. Fear is the parent of cruelty—and in religion, as in character, the slavish spirit is ever the most unfeeling.”

Go, witness a Methodist camp-meeting scene by night. Stand beyond the outer circle—stand where the giant trees hide with their foliage the calm sky and the beautiful stars, where the darkness seems to mold itself to your very form.—What a scene is that before you. Fear of the Infinite God, wild and terrific, is holding grand carnival. The camp fires burn with a lurid glare. Stirred by the rustling winds, their forked flames now and then dart as if in rage at the surrounding darkness, and recoiling seem to lap the blue and ghastly faces of the worshipers, like the red tongues of serpents. Some one is rising to speak. What a wild, haggard looking man—tall and gaunt, with disheveled locks and eyes that roll in their sockets like burning globes! His lengthened shadow is almost as terrible as himself. Falling upon the edge of the outer darkness, it is headless. He sways like a wind-smitten tree with a rustling sound toward his

audience, and speaks. His voice is high and shrill—striking the ear like a lancet—thrilling one at first like the touch of a cold hand in the dark. He is calling upon sinners to repent.—His words seem to hurtle against the hearts of his hearers like fire-tipped arrows. He dwells upon Eternity and the Fiery Lake. His voice rings not only in human ears, but in the great ear of nature also. The shadowy hills with their muffled lips, murmur in echo, “The Fiery Lake;” and as they die away the brooding Spirit of the distant streams catches the words and hurls them back, making the crisp air crackle. The speaker has accomplished his work. His barbed shafts have pierced a hundred hearts.—The ground is strewed with the dying and the dead (to sin.) The scene has become most awful. Countless human forms are rising and falling, flitting to and fro, swaying, reeling and writhing, in the lurid light. Confessions, exhortations, prayers, groans, shrieks, howls and wailing and gnashing of teeth, mingle in horrid, stunning discord. It seems as if those great, gnarled oaks which have defied the tempests of ages, were quivering to their very roots as they gaze down upon the scene. Now and then, for a moment, you catch the expression of some pale and haggard face. It is terrible—it sends a

cold chill through you—it makes you sick at heart. Now and then some strong man, every muscle of his body strung to its utmost tension, the purple veins standing out upon his narrow forehead like whip-cords, his eyes burning under their shaggy brows with a wild, unearthly fire, springs to his feet and shouts, with “Glory to God,” his confession of joy—a wild, unnatural joy that delights in contemplating the never-ending vengeance of Jehovah and the endless agonies of the damned! You shudder as you listen to him. It seems as if his words were sounding every where, in all space. You hear them above, below, and on every side—hissing and crackling in the air, and dropping as it were drops of liquid fire! It seems as if all bedlam was let loose—and as if one would not have to visit the future world to find the “Fiery Lake.” Over all like a great black vulture, like an embodiment of the Spirit that is holding carnival, hangs the smoke of the camp-fires!

In the account of the ancient Samaritans you will find a forcible illustration of my subject.—Samaria was the capital of the Ten Tribes. At length it fell into the hands of the King of Assyria, and the Israelites were carried away into captivity. That so fair a land might not

run to waste the victorious king sent another race of people to occupy it. They were idolaters, and they carried with them to their adopted country, their idols and graven images to be set up in the temples once dedicated to Jehovah. But they did not prosper. Among other sore grievances they were scourged by wild beasts. This great affliction they believed was occasioned by their not worshipping the god of the land. On informing the Assyrian King of the state of affairs, he sent back several of the priests who had been carried into captivity, to teach the people the ways of the God of Israel. Hence, outwardly, they bowed down before Him on account of whose wrath they were scourged in order that He might become reconciled, while in secret they still loved and worshiped their ancient idols. There is a home-thrust in this account. It forces upon the mind reflections that may prove not altogether agreeable. I ask myself, as every other individual may ask himself, Am I not in some respects like those Samaritan worshippers? I have been taught that God is an avenging being—that he scourges his children in his displeasure—and when I have been bowed down with some great affliction, I have been told that it was a visitation of His wrath. Now

do I worship the Supreme because I love him, or because I fear him? If it is through fear, then I worship not from my own good will, and my worship is hollow, it is heartless. I am forced to it. I have attended revival meetings where men were made good by scores—not through a long and developing process—not through a gradual unfolding of the soul's most beautiful traits—but almost in the twinkling of an eye. And I have noticed that the most effective preachers on such occasions were those who could best portray the "Terrors of the Lord"—those who could bring up sinners to the stand wailing and with their hair standing on end.—But did those sinners after all their fright and professions, love God any better than before?—indeed, was it at all the result of love? Were they not influenced by motives similar to those which influenced the Samaritans?

I have heard a preacher declare in the pulpit that if he believed in the doctrines of Universal Grace, he would take the sword and sear and kill—would ravage the very earth! Judged by this silly and thoughtless expression he must have been a perfect monster—restrained from doing horrible violence only through fear of God's wrath!

But fear has not made a man good, nor a man sincerely devoted, since the world began. In the heart goodness is the reflection of a divine and perfect image, and not the forced-production of a hot-bed, nor the result of a system of artful dodging to escape God's displeasure!—Gradually and silently it steals in, as the light of the sun steals over the water, growing deeper and more beautiful until it passes into the gray portal's of night which open upon an endless morning. A good man is not made in a day. It is the work of a life-time. It is like the building of a beautiful and stately temple; stone after stone must be carefully wrought and laid, every stone the imperishable symbol of a noble deed.

We here take up the SECOND DIVISION of our Discourse which embraces the following matters to be discussed : A want of Joy, Deadness, and Skepticism, in the Church.

It seems strange that the Christian Church in view of the glorious and stirring truths of the gospel is not rich in spiritual joys, and mighty in spiritual activity—that every tongue is not untied for the melody of psalms and spiritual songs, and every knee supple for praise and thanksgiving. But it is not so. There is dead-

ness in the Church, and there is deadness out of it. Life has fled. The majority of men do not attend public worship because they are drawn there by a warm good will toward God. It is a matter of custom, party spirit and selfish policy. Religion is turned into theology, and theology into machinery. The great driving-wheel is the doctrine of the Trinity—the hopper the doctrine of the Atonement—the winnowing sieve, the doctrine of Reprobation—and the Church guards one trough and Satan the other.

So, because of this great labor saving machinery, Christians grow dull in the churches—so they grow dull everywhere. They stand upon no sure foundation. Their creeds have beaten the breath out of their bodies, and they hate their creeds and yet they dare not give them up—dare not denounce them openly—confined and cribbed as they are in the narrow shell of policy. The dominant church is like an overgrown child moaning and fretting and ready to burst its swaddling bands. A majority of members no more believe their monstrous creeds than they believe the stories of the Arabian Nights. There is unbelief everywhere. Go into the different branches of the Orthodox Church through the land, and inquire of each member

thereof if he believes in the doctrines of Infant Damnation, Vicarious Atonement, and Endless torment. What will be the answer? Can you find an enlightened and candid man anywhere, who will say from the bottom of his heart that he believes in either one of these awful doctrines? Yet they lie at the foundation of his spiritual profession; they are the corner-stone of his spiritual faith! As a member of a corporate body he gives them his countenance and support—as an individual with a heart of his own, he denies them. The whole systems of Calvinism and Arminianism are held together only by the outward pressure of a policy that is withering and blasting to all spiritual life and activity.—Were it not for this policy these systems would fall at once with a crash and be known no more.

No wonder then that there is deadness. No wonder that men yawn and sleep in church, and think that it would be well for them if they were somewhere else. Their creeds afford no new and stirring ideas. Year after year their teachers follow in the same beaten track, from Dan to Beersheba, and from Beersheba to Dan.—Their discourses are hewn and scribed according to statute. To introduce a new point would be to introduce a heresy. Men sit and profess

to listen and to believe when many of them do neither the one nor the other. It is hard to hear over and over what we know is absurd and therefore what is doing us no good—or only the good that comes from a narcotic that puts us asleep. We know just what points will be touched, precisely at what conclusions the preacher will arrive; we could say the whole over by heart—we have heard the same thing a thousand times. We know we shall get nothing new.

There is something wrong somewhere; and this is the wrong; God is misunderstood—Christ is misunderstood, and Religion is misunderstood. The divine promises are looked upon as null and void—the declaration of the angel virtually discarded—and Christianity, that principle, that life which should be as free and active as the winds upon the face of the earth, is cramped and broken, bridled and bitted, and made to tread its beaten circle in the great mill of Theology as it turns those creaking and jarring wheels by which sinners are ground into saints.

Virtually that Angel on the Judean hills spake a falsehood. He did not bring tidings of *great* joy. Disbelievers deny that it is a joy because they do not see its fruits—professed believers in

their hearts silently do the same, because they do not experience its effects. Christ is not the Savior of the world. His mission is a Failure. It brings with it no joy, but sadness, and terror and tribulation. Since the fourth century the sacred literature of the Church has sobbed and wailed and whined as over a hopeless sorrow. The great and leading minds have all been sad, gloomy and joyless. With a Teacher, a Guide and a Savior, they have still been like mariners on a ship without chart or compass and fearful every moment of crashing on hidden rocks.

Dismally enough they say that through Christ comes the most affecting display of the divine benevolence which the world shall ever behold—and yet their hearts gather no serene and hopeful joy therefrom, for they feel, as feel they must, “amid the universal wreck and ruin of our common humanity, that they themselves, even, have no comfortable assurance of finally reaching the realms of glory.” Dismally they speak of matchless grace—but their sad hearts and yearning souls refuse to respond. Can *they* call it matchless grace, to ordain a system for the recovery of lost man, which by its necessary and inevitable operation, must fix the doom of a vast majority of the human race, and consign them to the terri-

ble perdition of the fiery lake. Everything is uncertain, everything is at loose ends. Men fear to lean upon God, so terrific are the representations of him. But if they cannot lean upon him, upon whom can they lean?

Hence, everywhere in the church, there has been, and there is a want of joy. But without joy there can be no true and healthy activity. The heart of man pines for joy as the flower pines for the dew and the rain, and it droops without it. Look over the sermons written by Edwards, Chalmers, Hopkins, Emmons, Barnes, Stuart, and farther back the sermons of Calvin and Luther. Do you find there much upon the joys of religion? No—they are all of them as cold and grim as cast iron. Joy has thus been divorced from religion. It is thought that they should not go together. To become a saint one must skulk away from all merry hearts, smiling faces and silvery voices. The vital piety of a lively man, a man with a heart overflowing with the sparkling joys of life, is looked upon with a sideways glance. The type of the saint himself is a dismal, fearful man who groans inwardly and bears the cross of his Master with a sour visage. The flesh must be crucified, and this beautiful

earth *must* be turned into a monastery of cowed and shaven monks.

We should be sad because we are certain of nothing—because we oscillate like a pendulum between heaven and hell, and the slightest push may fix our eternal destiny.

Herein, then, lies the great secret of the deadness that is in the church—want of confidence—want of joy. But men are not dying to the true Religion, the only Religion that can save the world—they are only dying to their creeds. In an article published recently in the New York Independent, the most able Orthodox paper in the country, the author goes on to show why there is so much coldness and apathy in the Church and so much skepticism. I admire his courage while I wonder at it. He says, "We believe that a great change is preparing in religious opinion, of which these and many of our best men know almost nothing. To those who are thrown into the currents of life, it is evident that men's minds are in unusual working, and that the very foundations of Religious belief are rotten and shaking. Among all the earnest-minded young men who are at this moment leading in thought and action in America, we venture to say four-fifths are skeptical. This skepticism is not flip-

phant; little is said about it. It is not a peculiarity alone of the radicals and fanatics; many of them are of calm and even balance of mind, and belong to no class of ultraists. It is not worldly and selfish. The doubters lead in the bravest and most self-denying enterprises of the day.—It is not an unbelief to be laughed or hooted at, or hunted down. It is calm, abiding, earnest, sorrowful.

Not much is known of it above; but it underlies now all the strongest external movement.

There are, however, glimpses of it. You see it in the daily diminishing influence of the Pulpit, and the increasing influence of the Press; in the lessening number of strong and original minds who take hold of Theology, and in the tone of the men who are leading American thought. It speaks in those strange longings for a new revelation, and in the occasional denunciations of the old.

To us it seems strange that those Christian men should be boasting about church organizations and technical dogmas, or be troubled about consistency with orthodox standards and catechisms, or anxious about the question of pastor's salaries and what not, when the very ground and basis beneath our Christian Church

is trembling to its depths—to be squabbling over uniforms and rations when the very citadel is being sapped !”

The writer then proceeds to show the cause of this state of feeling. He says:—“The curse to the American mind, as we believe, has been the aspect presented in a portion of our Theology of DEITY. The God of some of our theologians is not a Being whom the human heart could either respect or love. Men have ascribed feelings to Him which they would utterly revolt at in themselves or in their fellows. We are not overstating. We know those with whom the memory of family prayer, early religious teaching and Sabbath sermons is so entwined with the picture of a hateful and repellent Deity, that they loathe and reject, in consequence, the whole religion of their childhood. To them always the first unconscious thought which enters the mind, of God, is the dread thought of the God of their Theology. Along with this, on every side weakening human faith, is the *Formalism* of present Christianity.”

Yes, this is it—and what is it all but the natural result of an advanced state of cultivation and development of mind, which can no longer content itself with dry, unintelligible and con-

tradictory creeds! It is the spirit of earnest, free inquiry, which is as a voice crying in the wilderness. The friends of Truth cannot but rejoice to see it progress—to see obstinate prejudices wearing down—old errors falling away—the spirit of bigotry subsiding—and the spirit of tolerance and liberality extending. In some portions of the community it may be called skepticism, and it may sometimes be that—but it is only the skepticism of reaction—the commotion of waters by which they are purified.—Neither a state of unbelief nor of doubt is pleasant to man. He cannot rest contented under it. Christianity has nothing to fear from skepticism—nor from investigation. Creeds only have worked it injury—but they are already relaxing their grip upon its throat and are being shaken off.

The deadness that is in the church is but a result of the slow and silent working of God's spiritual chemistry, that is working there as his physical chemistry works in the fields of nature. It is the deadness of the buried shell, the decomposition of the worthless husk. It is a deadness from which life shall spring forth, as from the perishing yet fructifying seed. Out of the dismal darkness, out of decay, up into the

glorious light and sunshine and air, shall rise and expand and blossom, that great tree whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations and under whose broad branches every family and kindred of the earth shall sit—a type of the true Church Universal.

V.

THE DIVINITY IN MAN.

Now ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—1st CORINTHIANS, iii, 16.

WID a certain saint, I think it was Chrysostom, speaking of the Shekinah, the Ark of Immony, the visible revelation of God among ancient Hebrews, "The true Shekinah is . . ." And so it is. We need no outward proof to convince us of the fact. A still small voice rising from the inmost depths of the soul—voice that the clamor of the vain, suspicious world cannot silence—forever whispers to us that we are divine; that the I AM, the will to do, the dare, the spring of all heroic endeavor in the moving, breathing tabernacles not made with hands, is a breath of heaven, a revelation of the true God.

There is but one temple in the universe, says the mystic, and that is the body of man. Noth-

ing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body.

This truth was impressed as with letters of fire on the mind of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. If ever a man entertained a true idea of the importance and dignity of his race, that man was Paul. He looked upon his fellow creatures not as merely human—as machines working their allotted time and then falling to decay—but as embodiments, individual organizations of matter pervaded with and glorified by an intense spiritual life that could not die—a life forever unfolding and reaching forward into the Infinite. His great mind wonderful alike for its vigor and intensity of conception, was all alive with the thought. He had been a worshiper at the Temple's inner shrine—he had drank in streams of light from the living Fountain itself until dizzy with excess of glory. The mystery of life and of death lay unveiled before him—and how majestically in his first Epistle to the men of Corinth, does he discourse upon the resurrection—the uprising of the divinity from its riven, crumbling temple! “Behold, I show you a mystery—we shall not all sleep, but we shall

all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye—at the last trump—and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality!" Again, in his second Epistle to the same, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. For we, that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." And again, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die—and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be!" This is the mystery of the resurrection bathed in the light of the Christian Revelation. As from the seed sown in the cold moist earth, springs up the beautiful flower filling the air with its fragrance, so from these frail, perishing bodies, when laid in the dust, rises the blossom of immortal life—the deathless soul triumphant over the sting of death and the victory of the grave!

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God! Night and day let the cherubim with flaming swords guard its sacred portals that no evil thing may enter, and endeavor without cessation to elevate and edify the spirit within. This was the aim and end of the great Apostle's preaching—and to impress it on the minds of his fellow-men he toiled as neither man nor apostle had ever toiled before. With the commission of God in his hand, and a heart filled with burning zeal, all scarred and grim with toil and persecution, and foot-sore with travel, in the ears of the listening, wondering multitude he poured those great truths that were ever gushing up hot from his fiery heart. The divine Master, he who spake as never man spake, had passed away, and Paul stood alone, a tower of living light between rebellious man and his Maker!

It was this knowledge of the dignity of man—of the divinity within his breast—that so filled the Apostle's soul with the importance and grandeur of his mission. He was not preaching unto mere flesh and blood—but unto the deathless intelligence within—unto the germ that should yet expand into a seraph.

It is this divinity within, this spirit forever

brooding over the temple's altar, that is the source of all reverence and worship. It has been so from the beginning of the world, and so it shall be to the end. The Ancients, to whom the I AM, the TO BE, was a dread enigma, were perhaps in their own way, more intensely devout than those who now live and worship under the light of the Christian Revelation. How simple, how child-like and earnest, and at times how grand, were their superstitions and faith, compared with much of the cold, calculating philosophy of to-day. They were seekers after God—after an embodiment of that spiritual life which lies at the source of all action—that which lifts the world from chaos, and clothes it with light and perennial beauty. But they could not look into the core of things. They beheld only the ripples and eddies on the surface of the great current, the mysteries of passion and affection that lay beneath they could not see. It was with them as with men who lie in their beds at sea, tossing to and fro with only a single plank between them and the briny deep. Confined in their narrow, individual existence, through the long, starless night of ignorance, there was all the time rushing by them, its moanings in their ears, its tremblings reaching to their hearts, the

mystic tide of the sea of life. Their souls, and all that was within them, were filled with an intense longing, a passion to inquire into and know the why and the wherefore of that which was not given unto them to know. They felt that there was beyond their mortal vision, something more glorious than cold lifeless forms of matter.

In a temple not made with hands, a temple paved with fragrant turf and roofed by the blue sky, whose organ was the deep toned thunder and the roaring cataract, whose choir was the sweet-voiced birds of heaven, did those primeval men, with the freshness of the world's youth in their hearts, bow down and worship that divinity to which their own ardent, yearning souls had given existence. It is no wonder that Paganism—that rough old husk of to-day's Pantheism—should have taken root in so rich a soil, or that it should have had within it a fiber of perennial truth. Paganism was a necessity of human nature in a certain condition—it was the outward, unguided manifestation of the divinity within.

The grim Sabeian, creator of gods, did not bow down in reverence before the image his hands had carved until it had been touched and

glorified by the intense light that was forever gushing out from the divine essence within his own soul—and then he worshiped it—not the cold, inanimate stone as he vainly imagined—but the presence in which it stood, and that presence was himself—a temple of God, with the spirit of God within. This was the secret of all primeval worship—it was the worship of the true God within through the medium of outward and foreign objects—and from its very blindness it was ardent, intense, devout. To the same grim Sabeen, unconscious of his divinity, yet forever walking in its light, nature was divine—it was God—in each star, in each blade of grass, in each humble flower, it was God, and he bowed down, as before the graven image, and worshiped, not in reality the star, nor the blade of grass, nor the flower, but the Infinite that lay beyond. The moon shining down upon the desert touched the heart of the wild Ishmælite whom it was guiding across the trackless waste—that burning eye glancing out upon him as it were from the great deep of Eternity—and he did it homage. In his rude conception, to that intense orb belonged a spirit like unto the unrealized, the unknown, within his own breast—and from which, though unrealized and unknown,

came unconscious as he was of its source, his idea of existence, of spirit, in foreign objects. True he was aware of the constant development of his own physical powers—of his bodily growth—but so also was he aware of the gradual increase in the stature of the palm tree by his tent. Once upon a time the boy Nadir planted a shrub on the banks of the bright river Pison, and the rain fell, and the sun shone upon it, and it grew and thrived year after year—and so did the boy Nadir. They grew up as it were together. Every day he who had planted the tree, no longer a child but a man, went and sat beneath its high branches, and talked to it, and revealed to it his rude aspirations, his hopes, his joys and his sorrows, as if that great shadowy palm had been a conscious being. To him it was conscious. This was the very nerve of Paganism—the flowing out of the divinity within into the universal, deifying with transcendent power and beauty all things that it touched—it was wonder, it was worship without limit. Even Abraham the Patriarch felt it, as he sat by the door of his tent in the mellow flush of twilight watching the still heavens, the falling of the shadows of the great night, the out-coming of the solemn mysterious stars as if from the depths

of the Inner Splendor; and David, the shepherd minstrel of Israel, in the freshness and freedom of youth, before the cares of a kingdom rushed thick upon him, felt it as he lay among the hills with his harp through the long summer nights. The wind moaning in the cedars, the voice of the soaring night-bird falling as it were from heaven, the faint murmur of the distant Kedron, were to him as the whisperings of the great Spirit of the universe, and his soul was filled with devotion. This was the secret of the wondrous power of the Hebrew Bards. Their poetry—the like of which shall not be written again to the end of the world—was but an embodiment of the divine passion struggling in their own souls—the translation of the same great voice that had fallen from Sinai and the burning bush. They were forever gazing through outward objects into the intense depths of their own divine life—those everlasting fountain depths sending up day and night streams of inspiration with a light far reaching into futurity. They wrote as it were face to face with God. They were the temple of God, and mightily was the spirit working within.

But all this was before the Christian Era.—
With the revelation that Christ brought into the

world, worship became direct, formal, severe. It was no longer considered as the divinity *within*, flowing out through outward objects back again unconsciously to its source. It was Christianity, grand, solemn, sublime, and no longer curious, ardent, intense Paganism. Yet it possessed the same fiber, and was the result of the same necessity of human nature.

The world felt to its very center long before it came, the Christian Revelation, that it was coming. The star-gazing Chaldean, and the simple shepherds among the Judean hills, watched for it—and when the star, that wondrous star, rose in the East, they exclaimed, “Lo, the long looked for has come!” Yes, thank God, it had come, and for eighteen centuries has it been the light of the world, lifting up and glorifying the human race.

Yet, the divinity that is in man, and that has been in the world for six thousand years, is not if I may so speak, radically changed. The soul still has its passions, its affections, its longings, the mind its mysteries, its wonders and its intense workings, the same as in primeval ages. The great central fires still remain, curbed and controlled as they are.

True, the husk that was around Paganism

has fallen off—but its vital energy still lives and flows in the life-blood of the Christian heart. Through its still subtil influence, the curious mind is ever reaching out from the light of Revelation into the darkness that lies beyond. We feel it in our love for that which is strange and mysterious—it shines out upon us in those reminiscences and dim recognitions which start up in a mind that on earth can have laid up no store of kindred thoughts—it moves us in those far reaching memories, which though buried are not dead!

Who has not experienced those strange workings of the mind, when it seemed to reel as it were from out the light that is given unto it as a guide! Who has not been thrilled by those intense gleams, which so often burst from the soul, and before they can be marked glide into that dim uncertain haze which forever hovers over the boundary that separates the visible from the invisible!

Like the lightning from the cloud, they dart from the divine depths within—like the echo of a spirit voice, they answer to the hidden, struggling passion, and are gone forever!

I know not why, but at times as these mysterious gleams flit across the mind, it is almost

difficult to persuade ourselves that we were not at some former period inhabitants of some other sphere—or that we did not live on earth in ages long gone and witness

“The glory that was Greece,
The grandeur that was Rome!”

It was under the influence of impressions akin to these, that the curious, Platonic student, musing in the Academic Groves, conjured up the startling idea of man's pre-existence—and under the same influence has many a Christian of the present time, less firm than others in the faith once delivered unto the Saints, been hurried into the belief that the soul at death becomes absorbed in the divine essence of the universe, thereby losing its distinct identity and flowing forth again into new forms of being, and so on, changing to and fro forever! Yet, what is all this but the unwritten revelation of the struggling spirit within—the same spirit that clothed with immortal beauty the myths of the ancient Greeks, and breathed the breath of a divine life in the great temples of the Pagan gods.

In the Christian Church at this day some of the rudest fragments of the old Pagan forms are cherished as sacred. What are the doc-

trines of the Popular Theology, in part, but the fossil remains of some of the heathen myths, clothed with new and artificial muscle? The doctrine of the decree of God's eternal revenge, how has it crept like a scourged wolf into the fold of Love! Revenge—it is opposed to all that is Christian—it is human, base—yet more homage has been offered unto it by the Faithful even while they feared the monster, than was ever offered unto the sacred Ibis in the temples of Osirus. And that grimest of all fables handed down from the days of Odin and his iron peers, concerning the lake of fire and the demons, how has it been used as a “bloody knout with which to scourge reluctant flesh across the finite world, whipping him at last smarting into heaven!” How have the learned shepherds of a thousand flocks expatiated upon its spirit, as it now stands in its second edition freed from the dust and stains of twice two thousand years! How have they taught from it, that those who come short in this life—good men perhaps who made the world better for having lived in it, yet died without repentance,—writhe in their tortures, and turn and turn without one ray of hope, while their cries of agony ascend forever to heaven and mingle with the music of the

golden harps of their blest kindred around the throne, who are filled with joy and exceeding peace though the blue 'air around and above them curdles with the cries and groans of those they loved in life; that from the surging, seething waves of that fiery flaming cauldron, infants over whose early departure from earth sighs were breathed and tears shed, shall turn their pleading eyes and stretch forth their tiny hands, unheeded, uncared for toward the spirits of those who bore them, in Paradise, and brother shall call unto brother, and sister unto sister, parent unto child and child unto parent, in vain for a drop of water to cool the parched tongue and frenzied brain! Who could withstand such teachings—and why should they not drive as many of the Lambs of Christ into the mad-house as into the Christian fold! Men once ardently believed that all this was gathered from the Bible—that Book of Love and Forgiveness—but there are very few now who believe so strange a thing.

For eighteen hundred years we had—I say *had*—received no tidings from heaven. True the dead, as the credulous and superstitious not long since believed, sometimes, bursting the cerements of the grave, rose up by night, and

passed before the eyes of the living, in their white robes. But they spake not—nor by any sign did they express their condition. But now we receive communications directly from the spirit land! It is discovered that those sounds, those mysterious rappings to which we have so often listened without wonder—as to the tick of the death watch in the silence of our chamber—are the vehicles of a celestial language. Heaven is laid open, and its mystery revealed. The bereaved may now hold daily converse with the loved and lost. The Beautiful, who vanished from our midst and returned no more, we now know what they are doing—that they love us still—and earth grows cold!

The spiritual seer sleeping in his mortal guise is caught up as it were and translated in the twinkling of an eye into the Inner Splendor of the upper deep—walks side by side with saints and seraphs in the broad bright streets of the city of God—and stands trembling in the presence of the burning throne of the Infinite. Men read his revelations with wonder—and treasure them up almost as choicely as they do the blessed oracles of our crucified Redeemer! Strange infatuation! How the ancient myths rise and eddy in the fountain of the Christian faith.

When such isms prevail in an age like this, need we wonder that the rude Mohammedan believed in the divine inspiration of his Prophet, —who like our own seer, ascended to heaven and plucked out its burning mystery!

As far back as the light of history reveals the prospect, we perceive that every nation, from the most barbarous to the most civilized, has had its particular God (or gods) who was devoted exclusively to their own interests, prosperity and glory and inimical generally to all other nations. We still see the same phenomenon presented where we should least expect it, in the Popular Theology, and which is very naturally the source of some of the monstrous dogmas of the Church. Those Christians who hold to the doctrine of Election, or those who believe that all who do not embrace their particular creeds, shall be damned and suffer endless torment, have but little better idea of their God so far as disposition is concerned, than the rude nations of antiquity—while in each case the selfishness of the human heart, that selfishness which would appropriate to itself and its particular class the greatest good to the injury of others, is painfully exhibited.

Man has ever been inclined to make God af-

ter his own carnal image—after the outward and the visible—or in other words to judge of him by the material forms through which he manifests himself to the understanding. As he cannot bring a purely spiritual being before the mind's eye, and yet must have something tangible, distinct, something which the mind can in a measure grasp, he conceives of the Deity as a corporeal being, giving him form and substance after the fashion of his own body, together with the gross passions and imperfections of his own animal nature. When this conception is carved in stone or wood, the worship of it is Paganism.

As we look back we find that the attributes of each nation's God (or gods) corresponded with the habits, tastes and disposition of the particular people who looked up to him. The God of a warlike nation was looked upon as a warrior, the leader of armies; the God of a pastoral nation, as a great husbandman, fond of flocks and harvest fields; and the God of the wild Indian, as a mighty hunter, delighting in the sports of the chase. But every nation alike attributed to its God those passions which dwell alike in the hearts of all nations, such as selfishness, hatred, anger and revenge.

Undoubtedly we must judge of the attributes of God from the stand-point of our own nature, but from our spiritual, and not from our animal nature. We know what love is, and we know what goodness is, in the soul, yet we never give to either form and substance. To us the spirit of man is invisible, and yet we may judge of its attributes from the effects that it produces. So also may we judge of God as far as is needful. When we speak of him as a Father, it does not follow that we should give him substantially the form of a human father. We look upon a human father as kind, affectionate and tender to his offspring, yet those beautiful elements, kindness, affection and tenderness, are not visible to the eye, and as far as they exist in the bosom of another we can judge of them only as they effect others or ourselves, or by like elements existing in our own bosoms.

In the minds of the mass of men, though none perhaps would acknowledge the fact, the Deity wears the form of a human sovereign wielding a scepter upon a throne. Such is the impression that will glide in. It comes in part from early teachings, from the manner in which the Deity is spoken of in figures of speech, and from attributing to him the baser passions of our im-

perfect humanity. When we hear God spoken of as a being capable of feeling emotions of hatred, wrath and revenge, we are likely to associate him with the most unlovable of our own race, with those who oppress and injure us; and when we read that "For the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels were predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death," we cannot refrain from thinking of the selfishness and injustice of human tyrants; and hence he gradually becomes corporealized in the mind and is looked upon as a kindred tyrant, but infinitely more powerful and terrible.

The sculptor carves from the ideal that exists in his mind, revealing it in marble to the outward eye. What if the Christian, who is endeavoring to convert the Pagan, should carve in wood or stone his ideal of the God that he worships, and set it up where he might render it daily homage! Is there any essential difference between worshiping the ideal in the mind, and the ideal in the stone? The Pagan transfers his ideal, his image, through the medium of the chisel, and hence he is called a Pagan. But his God is no more a false God than is the God of many a Christian. Let every Christian who shall read

this examine his own mind and ascertain if he has not an image there—the image of a being as unnatural and terrible as any Pagan god—and let him ask himself why he condemns the poor ignorant Pagan.

But the heart has desires and longings that reach out for something more than a Force that flows in the sap of trees and gives to the flowers their tinted colors, and that require to be satisfied something better than a great image modeled after the human form and representing as is generally the case an infinite tyrant, an awful monster, under whose uplifted arm ready to smite them with a terrible blow if they offend him, his poor children must cower and moan, a being the very thought of whom makes one sick at heart. But this thought I shall take up in the Discourse that is to follow.

VI.

THE DIVINE PATERNITY.

Have we not all one Father?—MALACHI ii. 10.
Ye therefore followers of God as dear children,—
JAMES v. 2.

THESE texts are significant. There is a simplicity and an earnestness about them that is one of the language of a pure-hearted man. "Have we not all one Father?" There is nothing near, and dear and home-like about it so simple as it is, it does what many a grand age cannot do. It touches and unseals a spring deep down in the heart that is filled with life's purest waters.

For those who have been blest with a happy home, and kind parents, the name of Father is peculiarly endearing. Around it cluster some of our brightest and holiest memories. It is spoken but to call up sweet visions of the

the ties that exist between parent and child

are among the purest and noblest that human nature is capable of forming. They are the tendrils of an eternal love, if birth can be given to such love in a world like this. Hence the pathos and yearning tenderness of those passages of Scripture in which God is spoken of as a father, and man, frail, sinful and erring man, as his child. They are not great and grand—they come from too deep a source to be ornamented with the flowers of language. But they are warm as though the blood of a great heart had circled about them before they were spoken. Always they are hopeful and cheering—yet sometimes they have produced a sensation in my breast like that which follows after a strain of low and plaintive melody. It is not depression, nor can I call it sadness, but a half-defined yearning for something more beautiful and tender, and something holier than I have yet known or seen.

While reading such passages as these I feel as if I were going toward heaven. If I have hatred it disappears—if I have malice and evil thoughts they pass from me. Like the spirit in the fable, love has come and twined its soft arms about my heart. I am ready to forgive and to forget. There is not a being in the world

to whom I would give one pang, or one moment's pain, for I feel that man, wherever he is, and whatever his condition, is my brother, and like myself a child of God. The faces that I summons before me in fancy are more beautiful than when I gazed upon them last. I still see the scars and the deep furrows of sin and sorrow, but beyond these I see as I did not before the mournful relics of early innocence and beauty, standing like the unmarred and stately columns of a ruined temple, beautiful in desolation, and many a bright trait that shines out from its crumbling tenement like a star through the thick clouds of midnight from the depths of its blue and beautiful home; and I think that on this basis the All-Father will in some golden era build his perfect man of God.

When I am dying, when I feel my limbs growing cold and stiff and the film closing over my eyes, I would have some dear friend read such passages to me. I could then enter the shadow of the dark valley calmly, sustained by an abiding trust and the hope of a blessed rest in my Father's house of many mansions.

The leading text that I have selected seems to have dropped sobbingly from the pen of the writer, as if the grief of unrequited affection was

heavy in his heart. He saw how men hated one another—how they wandered away from God, and filled the world with violence, and in the midst of his sorrow he asks, "Have we not all one Father?" Let us take the question home to our hearts and endeavor to answer it in the spirit of love.

We read that the Creator formed man in his own (moral) image, and that we are the temple of God, with the Spirit of God in us. When it is said that the pure in heart shall see God, it is meant that they shall know Him by their moral resemblance to Him. The Greeks, believed that to see Him was to die. Souls that reflected His image, as a mirror reflects a face, were prepared to enjoy the bliss of the Elysian Fields.

We can form no conception of God but from the stand-point of our own moral nature. "But, as the best specimen that we have of human nature is imperfect, and as long as the model which supplies the elements of character that enter into our conception of God, is not in the most exalted state that humanity is capable of gaining, no perfect delineation of the divine mind can be furnished, but from a higher source."—It was therefore one of the leading objects of Christ's mission on earth to represent the di-

vine character in its true light and as it is—and he furnished the world with an “essential requisite to a faithful representation of the Deity, which previous to *him* had no existence. He teaches us that *perfected human nature* is the only medium through which it is possible to make a revelation to humanity of a perfect God.” He represents God as a spirit kindred to man, and not foreign. In his delineation of the divine character he exhibits traits akin to the highest of our own, and shows us how beautiful and exalted our own may become. He exalts human nature by convincing man that he is not divided from God—not alien, but near to him, and bound to him by kindred ties and affections—and he gives man a motive, when he unfolds the fact that each individual soul is capable of arriving at such a state as to reflect the highest ideal of excellence as manifested in the divine image. He gives him a dignity and a character such as he had not sustained before. He teaches him that he is a co-operator with God—one of the moral forces of the universe—and that he has a great work to perform, and great interests to sustain. He creates in his bosom a consciousness that things cannot go on well without his aid and support, and that cele-

tial hearts are extending their sympathies to him. He is made to feel that he is a dependence as well as a dependent, and that the great and glorious plan of his Maker cannot be carried out to its perfection until he lends a willing hand and heart. It matters not whatever his present condition. The idea that he is nothing, and can hope to be nothing but a doomed and lost thing, is driven out before the idea that he is an absolute necessity,—that he is as necessary to the eventual harmony and happiness of the universe as is the tallest arch-angel that bows his radiant forehead night and day before the throne. Heaven cannot be complete without him.

Christ makes all this tangible and clear by a revelation the most soul-cheering and soul-elevating that the world has yet received. It is that God is our Father, and that we are all of us his children—not in some poor, figurative or abstract sense, but bound together by the holiest ties of consanguinity and affection—ties that can never be broken, however sadly at times they may vibrate to the touch of sin. This revelation stands in the very foreground of all Christ's teachings, is the very keystone of his ministry,—and it lifts our hearts up to the Au-

thor and Finisher of our faith, as the star lifts the night dew to its shining bosom.

The scales have fallen from our eyes, and a world of light and love opens before us. New sentiments are created in our souls, and new hopes and aspirations. God is not the being that in our blindness we conceived him to be—he is not distant, nor is he cold and stern, possessing little in common with ourselves but the passions of hate and revenge. He is near to us; he enters into our daily life, our daily walks, and our daily loves, however humble they may be. He is our Fàther. He loves us, and pities us when we are tried, and opens his yearning bosom as a rest for our aching hearts.

An appeal is made to our filial affections the most touching that can be addressed to a human heart—an appeal which awakens the highest and holiest emotions, love, gratitude, hope and faith. Family affinities are discovered where our feet have never trod, and family ties formed extending over seas and continents, and the love and good will of our hearts follow the light of the morning sun round the world. Our affections go up with a soundless tread through the gateways of marble palaces and nestle near the couches of sleeping kings; they go down with a

wing of light and a voice of tenderness into the dark hovels of the poor and oppressed, and they whisper yearningly, lovingly, winningly in the winds, in the running brooks and in the sunlight to the rude, wild children of the forest and the island. We acknowledge at once the force of a new obligation that extends down into the very depths of our being. We had conceived of God only as our Creator, and when weak and tempted, sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning, the hours of encouragement and hope few, the hours of darkness and despondency many, we could not but ask murmuringly, why he had created us thus to suffer, to be miserable, and only to water with our tears the seeds of death within us? We had conceived of him only as a mighty Sovereign ruling with a rod of iron, and when bleeding and smarting under the penalty of laws that we had transgressed because our sad broken down hearts were too weak to resist temptation, we could not but ask murmuringly why for his glory were we made self-governors and yet not left to follow our own inclinations? But instantly when God is named the Father, do gratitude for his kindness as our Creator and reverence for his holiness and justice as our Ruler, blend in adoration. Beauti-

ful, Oh beautiful and touching was that prayer of Christ's, "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in thou and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them!"

Not only do we learn the fact that God is the Father of us all, but in his nearness to the immaculate First Born, to that holy child of Life and Light, who came to show the world how glorious human nature may become, to what serene heights it may ascend, and how virtue may triumph and rise above temptation even in a tenement of clay, do we see a proof of the presence of the Divine and Infinite in man, and learn the source of those deathless yearnings and winged aspirations which dart like sunbeams through the night of the grave, and dispel the grim terrors of death. To those who are struggling for the victory, sometimes gaining and sometimes losing a step, sometimes hopeful and sometimes cast down and discouraged, how cheering, and still more, how glorious to those who have triumphed, and above the storms and scathing lightnings of the world have grasped the peerless prize, is the thought that goodness in a human soul, goodness perfected through

days of heroic self-denial, through sleepless nights, through tears and sighs and groans and the bloody sweat, is a condition of God's manifestation in the brightest and highest form in which the earth is capable of displaying the Divine Majesty.

Holding the views of human nature that I do, to me, what is called the Fall of our first parents does not seem altogether dark and sad. There was about it something grand and beautiful.—Two simple, sinless children placed together in a garden of fountains and flowers, were living idly, living like birds and not like quickened spirits, contented with the lowest grades of being, until an angel passing out left the garden gate ajar for light to steal in—that long golden beam which crept through the grass and through the flowers and up to the hearts of the sleeping babes, and which is called a serpent because it crept. It was well that the beam reached those hearts, else there would have been but two hearts to this day, and still they would have been very small hearts, good only for singing among the flowers. There was no fall when that beam like a wand touched the closed eyelids, but then and there two immortal spirits, unconscious of their powers, were awakened to

the spirit's life, its trials, its sorrows, its triumphs and its glory; and then and there the first upward step in the eternal march was taken. No new elements, no new faculties, were added to the soul, but the power to know and to unfold those already possessed. The hand of God was in it all.

There is but one Good said the Son of Man—God is the one, the Infinite Good, and his spirit flows into the heart of man as the life-blood of the parent flows in the veins of the child.—The more we strive after perfection, (I use the term here as synonymous with the highest state to which a human being can aspire,) and the nearer we approach our object, the deeper and stronger become the tides of the divine spirit within us. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, with the Spirit of God in you?”—Those grim and cruel doctrines of Election and Endless Woe, associated with fearful visions of incarnate fiends and fiery pits, how are they swept away before this great Truth, while the term Father rises like a star of Bethlehem in the calm still heaven of our love!

The Theology that makes God a tyrant makes him also a task-master, and man a mere hireling, hired to be good and to love his Maker for a

stipulated sum, called a reward, to be paid in drafts on heaven in the great pay-day of the Resurrection. He who works well is to be paid well, while he who sleeps behind the hedge is not only not to be paid, but is to be punished for his delinquency, not as a father would punish a child, not even as a human tyrant would punish a slave by destroying him! It is a punishment that makes the blood run cold and the hair stand on end to think of—but be faithful, be good, love the Author of it and you shall escape it; aye, and while you are enjoying your reward, wearing the starry crown and striking the golden lyre, you shall hear with a keen relish, as they break in upon your everlasting bliss, the shrieks and howls that it wrings from poor hearts which perhaps you once loved! But all this is fatal to the growth of the affections, to the unfolding of the higher life that is in man. The soul droops under it and skulks away from its Maker, and has no hope, no confidence, and no rock whereon to rest its weary wings. Oh, is it not strange that man does not learn that the highest reward of goodness consists in the unfolding of its own blessed self, and the highest honor that can be conferred upon the good man, next to the approving smile of

Heaven, an acknowledgment of the feeling that he inspires in the breasts of those near him that they are but one step removed from God, that the warm hand which grasps theirs has touched the glowing hem of the Infinite !

This sense of union with God, this consciousness of life from the Eternal, called out in Jesus a corresponding love and devotedness which lead us up into a knowledge of the Father at once deep and glorious. In himself he gives us an example of what we may and should become ourselves. In him we see the true liberty of a child of God—the liberty of a heart freed from passion, freed from selfishness. There is nothing which separates that great, unfallen soul from the Father. The sublime consciousness that he was doing the will of God, and living a true life, came like the heavenly angel to strengthen him in all his trials. “The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?” How deep must have been his conviction of the divine love when through the exercise of disinterestedness he felt that he was entering into the very glory of God, and that his name would be embalmed in the hearts and brought down on the mighty affections of all succeeding generations.

God then is our Father—and we are his children. The Apostle John poured out the riches, the tenderness, and the pathos of his soul in contemplating and enforcing this sublime truth. It is *the* truth of the heart, *the* truth of the affections, and *the* truth of the world. When we receive it, when we feel its force—when its light reaches down searchingly into the dim chambers of our being filling them with its silent glory, we become new beings. The wand of life has touched our lips, and the darkness of death passes from our hearts. Evermore the traces of affliction and sorrow, like the shadows of the night, point toward the morning. We see ourselves as we are. The folly as well as the baseness of sin is exposed ; our rebellious passions shrink away. We hear the voice of our Guardian calling us as lambs hear and know the voice of their shepherd. The All-Father gently folds us in the arms of his love, and we feel that we are his dear children.

The holy angels all through the long and silent nights, with the skill and secrecy of heavenly artisans, are silently linking our hearts to the hearts of others, and the hearts of others to ours, with the golden chain of Universal Brotherhood. We cast off our forms, our reserve, our spiritual

pride, as we cast off our winter garments. We step lightly into the open air. It is Spring. The ice, and the snow, and the cold winds are all gone. We hear the birds singing, and our hearts sing with them. We feel a desire to grasp the whole world by the hand. There is an air of activity and enterprise about us. We have discovered that there are claims upon us, and that we have affairs to attend to on this earth beyond the narrow circle of our own firesides.— We have clambered over our party walls and feel a love for those outside. The social and the moral have risen above our catechisms and our creeds. We relax the muscles of the face, and treat ourselves to the genial sunshine of a smile. We walk and speak naturally. We are ready to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to raise the fallen, to protect the helpless, and to forgive the offender. Our homes and our firesides have expanded to an indescribable breadth. There is room for the whole world; and where there is room for the whole world, there is room for the angels. But whence comes this great change? I will tell you. We have lost a partial tyrant and gained a Father—have lost the stone that lay so coldly in our bosoms, and gained hearts that are living, and warm, and gene-

rous—have lost our exclusiveness and our spiritual pride, and gained a world of brothers.

How miserably defective appear the creeds and dogmas of Theologians in the searching light of this truth. Those sophisms—Election, Reprobation, Vicarious Atonement, Reconciliation of God's Wrath, Endless Woe, how are they dispelled by the simple term FATHER, like the shadows of the night when the sun lifts its radiant face above the horizon!

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” How a father feels for and pities the child of his affections. How earnestly he watches over him and protects him. How his heart and his prayers follow him wherever he goes. Does he delight in the sufferings of that child? Does he love to hear him moaning in grief or in pain? No, he would gladly suffer in his place, he would lay down his life for him! But when that child sins and goes astray, when he becomes reckless and abandoned, when there is no one else to love him and to care for him, oh, then, stronger than earth, as strong as the love of the angels in heaven, are the quickened affections of the parental heart! With what deathless constancy do they cling to their object! Let him go where he may and fall as

low as he may, they will follow him to shield him from the sneers and shafts of the heartless world, to cheer him when all others have deserted him, clinging closer and still more close as the storm gathers and the blast beats. He cannot leave him, he cannot give him up. He would coin his heart's best blood to save him. The quiet chamber where he slept in the innocence of childhood, each pleasant room in which he played, seem filled with sweet visions of his early presence as he appeared in many a happy hour—the dumb walls seem to breathe his name as with living tongues, the void air to fall apart as with the cleaving melody of his voice as it sounded in the parent's ear, when he was a light-hearted, merry boy, untouched by sin and sorrow !

So does God love and pity his children, all sinful and wayward as they are. Oh, how beautiful and touching is that Parable in which the brooding tenderness and deathless love of the Father are drawn in such living colors by him who could do it the best of all! A shadow of wrath never darkened the deep tides of that Great Heart. In fancy as I write, I hear the angels, the same sweet voices that floated down from the lone Judean hills, and they seem to

ask, "If such is the pity and compassion of the Lord toward his children in this sinful state, his pity toward them when with their sufferings is mingled so much that is vile, what will be his delight in them when they shall have ceased to sin, and shall be conformed to his perfect image—when misery is no more, and sighing has ceased and God's hand has for the last time passed across the weeping eyes, and wiped away the last tear?"

The more I apprehend and feel the force of this truth, the higher value do I place upon human nature. I look upon the bright side, and am cheerful and hopeful. Every soul, like the cloud, has its silver lining. I behold sin all around me, and where I do not see it I suspect its existence ; still, I never meet a soul that it has entirely robbed—no soul but retains some relic of its departed innocence—some spark of the celestial fire still glimmering in the ashes, and never burnings so low but the wing of some sweet angel may fan it into a living flame. Sin drags many a soul down into the dark, wild banquet of death, and presses the brimming goblet to the pale lips until the heart sleeps ; but in that goblet, mixed with the wine, is the wholesome bitterness of the myrrh, and no heart sleeps so

soundly but it shall be awakened when touched by the wand of life in the Father's hand. Not long since I saw a poor inebriate reeling past me in the street. His clothes were torn and soiled, and his bloated face and great, hard hands weak as an infant's for all the power that slept in their wiry muscles, were covered with his own blood. The sight of him sent a chill through me. As great a slave as walks the earth, he had staggered up to the ballot box that was made only for freemen, and while depositing his vote, had fallen upon the floor in a fit—and it was a heavy, cruel fall. He passed on. Boys stared at him, and sober men shook their heads. For the time, he stood lower in the scale of being than the poor, dumb ox. Few pitied him and none loved him but the great God up in heaven. He reeled away, and I saw him no more—but I thought of him. Poor, miserable and degraded as he is, he is not lost. Oh no, not lost—for he is a child of God—my brother and your brother! He still has a heart, and deep down under its incrustation of cinders and lava there are fountains that we do not see—fountains that shall yet open to the touch of some prophet's rod, and water the desert until it blooms like a garden. And those brothers

who have served him so cruelly, and who will still give him the burning cup—their hearts too shall be touched—and the tempter and the tempted shall be lost in the holy union of Brotherhood, when each shall live for the other and for God.

With the consciousness that God is our Father, we feel that we have a friend and protector who will never deceive us. We can go to him with our sorrows and our heart-burdens, and find in his tenderness a balm that shall heal our wounds. He touches with his gentle finger the marble lips of our grief, and like the statue of Memnon they become melodious. The light of his benignant smile warms and flushes with its own radiance the cold forehead, and that which had crushed us weeping to the earth, is changed into an angel of light and love, scattering choicest blessings from its wings. We can endure all that the Father sends, and feel that the yoke is easy and the burden light. We never quail under the weight of the cross that he lays upon our shoulders—for Christ bore the same. We may stagger, but it will not crush us. "The duty he imposes upon us, like a sort of inner mail, supports while it compresses us, so that we walk more upright and firm for the iron bands that tighten round our bosoms, while over all in their snowy whiteness, float the robes of peace and purity."

VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

Thy Brother shall rise again.—JOHN xi, 23.

LAZARUS was dead—Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha, and tears were rising to their eyes and sighs to their lips from the depths of a divine sorrow. They had buried the dear one from mortal sight—had placed the cold stone upon the sepulcher's mouth, and he was gone forever. Forever? The heart of woman clings to hope as a star clings to heaven. In that sad and trying hour the weeping sisters thought of Christ, the Redeemer. It was a blessed thought. If there was one in the wide world who could render them comfort it was that wandering man of sorrow who had often in his weary journeyings, reposed beneath their humble roof, and had ever repaid their hospitality and kindness with some gentle word that

fell from his lips like sweetest music. Like the fallen vine that reaches out its frail tendrils into the sunshine, after the storm, for something upon which to cling, their souls were yearning for Christ. He was their dearest, their best friend. They felt that they could lean on him, could breathe into his ear the story of their grief, and find in that great heart a response. A great sorrow is holy, and it can be told only unto such as are good and holy. It shuns the gaze of the worldly, and the common words of consolation. There have lived but few in this world who, like Christ, were worthy of the recital of such a sorrow ; and they have stood, their faces radiant with the light of love, between the living and the dead. The echo of their footsteps has been music unto the wounded heart, and their soft words a balm more precious than all the gold of Ophir.

Yes, they thought of Christ, those pure-hearted, loving sisters in that sad hour of trial. Even before, they had thought of him as they stood like ministering angels watching in the night-time by the sick one's couch, and had dispatched a messenger with the tidings, "Behold he whom thou lovest is sick !" Thrilling words are these when addressed unto the absent. Who has not

felt their power! How often have they been uttered in the midst of revelry, chilling the gay heart and driving the blood from the flushed cheek; how often have they been borne with their crushing weight to the wanderer far from the home of his youth! "He whom thou lovest is sick!" They are words that burn in the memory with a wild and weird power like midnight stars in a stormy sky—words that are associated with our recollections of the death-bed and the breaking of the golden bowl!

When Jesus received these sad tidings he was far from Bethany, the home of Lazarus, and out of Judea; yet ever prompt to the call of duty, ever ready to go where he might alleviate human suffering and woe, though his feet were weary with long wandering, he said unto his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again!" With a heart overflowing with the tenderness of a beautiful and touching love, he was yearning to stand beside the couch of his dying friend—that gentle youth into whose listening ear in brighter and better days he had poured those holy teachings which purify the soul and give it wings for heaven. But when he made known unto his disciples his desire to return again to Judea and be with Lazarus, they straightway began to cau-

tion him, saying, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?"—They thought how they had stolen away in the darkness of the night from their cruel enemies—how they had wandered, hungry and dispirited, with bare and bleeding feet, over the deserts and the cold mountains, clinging with a deathless constancy to the Master and his cause, and they could not see why he should go, or why they should follow him back again into the midst of the awful perils from which they had but just escaped. Methinks I see them as they sat there on the gray rocks by the lonely hill-side in the silence of evening consulting together! Christ is in their midst, pale but beautiful and serene.—They have in their keeping the joys, the hopes, and the happiness of a world. Their faces are white and haggard with toil and care. Doubts have been expressed, followed by a silence so intense as to be almost audible. Then a low, soft voice is heard rising in the still air and gliding into heaven: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep!" The disciples hesitate. But the expression of each face is that of sadness rather than of fear. The eyes of Christ are turned upon them one by one, flooded with unutterable tenderness. They feel

their hearts melting within them. Then uprises Thomas, the brave, faithful, loving Thomas with his pale brow uncovered, and stretching forth his arm until it quivers in the dim star-light, with one bleeding foot pressed to the cold stone on which he had been sitting, he exclaims from the depths of his great heart, "*Let us also go that we may die with him!*"

Mary and Martha had returned from the sepulcher, where they had laid their brother, to their now desolate home with hearts crushed and bleeding. Home? It seemed no longer like home to them, the bright happy home of other days! The sun had fallen from their little heaven, and all was dark. Oh, if there is any thing in this world that can try the faith of the human heart, it is that hour when we return from the burial of a loved one, with the hollow sound that the cold clods made as they fell into the open grave still ringing in our ears—when we sit down by the cheerless hearth and gaze around upon the things that belonged to the departed; the vacant chair, the favorite book, the affectionate mementoes of other days; and when in the delirium of our agony, we bend the listening ear half unconsciously as if to catch the echo of a well-known step, the melody of a voice we shall hear

no more! In such an hour how the heart cleaves to heaven, to Christ, to God! The beauty of the earth is gone and with it our love for the things that were once dear to us. What matters it to us if the sun does shine and the fields are green! The flowers have lost their fragrance and their glory. In the blue eyes of the wild forget-me-not the dew-drops gather like tears; and the robin that was ever so sweet and plaintive, chants but a woeful dirge day after day in the budding locust. For the time being we are like some desolate pine standing upon the mountain-top, which having been smitten and scathed by the lightning's fire, points day and night with its few remaining boughs, solitary and alone, silent and motionless as it were sculptured stone, toward heaven!

But the sisters are not without hope. Like stars, which seem purer and shine brighter after having been for a season enveloped in a storm-cloud, their spirits are assuming a deeper and holier radiance. Thus ever is the soul sanctified by its greatest tribulations and made stronger and braver for the march of life and the climbing of the Eternal Hills. Those who have not suffered have not learned to live! But to the heart-stricken mourner life, and time, and death

when the first wild throbs of grief are over are doubly dear and sacred, when in the rapture of prayer the yearning spirit rises in divine ecstasy as on wings of light to the Throne of God; when every day seems as an out-falling gleam from the radiance of heaven, and every night is melodious with the sweet hymns of the angels! Oh, tell me, you who have suffered, have you never in the long, still nights when your pillow was damp with tears, heard by your lonely bedside the low ripple of the slow moving waves of the UNUTTERABLE LOVE bearing into your presence some beautiful vision of the sainted dead to gaze upon you with eyes filled with ineffable tenderness, to speak to you in the sweet tones you thought to hear no more on earth? And did you not feel through every nerve the delicious silence that followed when the heart grew strangely calm, and the sweet odor of returning hope imbibed the soul as with the fragrance of heaven? * * * * As I write the stars burn on my casement, and there comes a voice floating down from the lonely hills. I feel that there is in the night a Spirit and a Power. A Spring-night, and O how much there is that is teeming with life! Innumerable green blades are piercing the thick sod, and in the wild woods the pe-

tals of the pure violet are struggling with the rough husk of the bud. To yonder garden of God, where the corruptible is planted that it may spring up incorruptible, comes there no wandering spirit to stroll among the low mounds and the white stones in quest of its cast off robe?" No, no; but there rises in fancy before me here, here in the dim solitude, a form to memory ever dear. It touches with a gleaming finger the cold lips of my great sorrow, and they breathe forth a strain of melody that thrills my inmost being. Heaven opens before me, and I see filing round and round the Throne of the Eternal in their dazzling robes, the lambs that have been gathered from a thousand earthly flocks, and as I gaze I know, I feel, that with them it is well, and I am ready to exclaim with the sainted Paul, "O death where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory!"

There they had lived together, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, in their quiet little cottage in Bethany, their souls growing up and twining together until they became as one soul, beautiful in their unity. Their home was a true Eden hid within love's tenderest foliage, and there went on the play of three hearts as free from care and

passion, as full of hope and as radiant with life's sunshine as if there were no world of sin and sorrow without. Christ had been there and made that home lovely as he makes every home which he enters. Indeed, no home can be called a home in the best sense of the term in which he is a stranger. Oh, thou Immaculate One, I bless thee, with my whole heart I bless thee, for from that dear home in Bethany, around which ever lingered the melody of thy voice and the light of thy smile, went forth a spirit which has been passing up and down the world ever since, making a countless number of other dear homes, scattered here and there like sunny islands in the wide ocean, where the storm-tossed mariner finds peace, and rest, and warm hearts!

Mary had often sat at Jesus' feet, and she murmured to her sister as she sat locked in her embrace, "Oh, that *he* had been here, for then our dear brother would not have died! But he is gone, gone all in the midst of great, holy joys from us to God—and our sainted mother went before him as if to make ready for him his home in heaven; for did not that DEAR ONE when he was last here from his wanderings tell us as we sat by him in that golden evening of the departed Spring, of a House of many man-

sions more beautiful than any earthly house made with hands, which is inhabited by those whom we call dead ! Let us not then weep too sorely, but rather let us strengthen our faint spirits with something that is spiritual—let us say something right loving to each other about that Being who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb and hears the young ravens when they cry !—Martha, God hears us now and he will not desert us. Did not the dear one say that He is love, that he looks down tenderly upon all that his hands have made—and that we and all who live upon the earth are his dear children ! Let us in this dark hour—Oh, why should I call it *dark!*—think of those holy seasons when we have prayed to that Ineffable Being in the rapture of prayer, and of that time when through the words of his adorable son first entered our minds that greatest and noblest thought they can ever know, the thought of the Infinite Love ! Martha, have you forgotten how often we have gazed up into the blue day-sky and the blue night-heaven, when the sun or the stars seemed to rest on the holy Mountain like a shining coronet, and wept with joy as we thought of the unutterable goodness and kindness of Him who has made so much that is lovely and delightful



for the enjoyment of his children—and how much fairer, if this world is so fair, must be the heaven where stands His Throne! Do you not remember that Jesus once told us as we were watching the shepherds as they led their flocks down from the mountains late in autumn, that there were green pastures far, far away beyond time and death into which autumn and the cold winters never come—and where the flocks feed through the sunny years by the still waters, and the flowers bloom and the birds sing perennially! Were not those sweet tidings—do they not seem sweet to us now? Let us then think of that heavenly reunion which is to reunite us with the departed—a re-union that shall never be broken!” Thus were the sisters consoling each other with mutual words of consolation, when suddenly the sky became dark above their humble dwelling. The winds were hushed and there fell a shower of rain pattering on the roof like the feet of doves, followed by a flash of fire and a peal of thunder. The sisters twined their arms more closely together.—But the storm soon passed, leaving a crimson flush and three beautiful rainbows arching over the setting sun. The sight was very beautiful—and still more beautiful when from under the

mild radiance of the bows, wending their weary way toward the cottage of Bethany, for they had journeyed from a far country, appeared the form of Jesus followed by his faithful disciples ! With a heart stirred by a sudden and thrilling impulse, and an expression of confidence on her face such as woman only can wear, beautiful and holy as the light of the setting sun upon the earth after a day of storm, Martha hastened forward to meet her friend with the words, "Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died ! But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Here we have an expression of faith that is as beautiful and touching as it is sincere. Leaning upon the bosom of her dear Savior she appealed through his gentle heart to the God of the stricken mourner feeling that her appeal would be answered. Then Jesus said unto her, "*Thy brother shall rise again !*" Oh, the music of those words ! Thy brother shall rise again ! It was the utterance of a great heart touched and glorified by the Infinite Love. Those words shall live forever, and forever shall they arch like a beautiful rainbow above the grave. Dry thy tears O disconsolate mourner, and let the light of faith and hope once more il-



lume thy riven heart! Husband, by the bier of thy departed wife, be thou comforted—mother, by the low mound of thy dead child, as thou girdlest it with thy yearning prayers and waterest the simple flowers with the holy dews of affection, remember the cheering words of thy Redeemer, and once more stand erect in the strength of the Lord like a tree that is planted by the river of waters!

After the first greeting between those two beautiful spirits was over, Jesus inquired for Mary, and Martha hastened to call her saying, “The Master is come and calleth for thee!”—Hearing this Mary arose and went unto him, and as she drew near she fell at his feet, exclaiming as Martha had done before her, “Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.”

Then, when he beheld the sore anguish of Mary and Martha, “Jesus wept.” Oh thou, to whose eyes are rising the burning tears from the depths of a divine despair—thou, whose broken spirit is bowed to the dust—thou, who dost feel that there is naught in the wide world on which to lean—remember that thy Redeemer wept and passed into heaven! Precious words—like balm to the wounded heart—like dew to

the drooping spirit! There they shall stand forevermore, forming the shortest yet most thrilling sentence in the Book of Life! Two simple words emblematical of hope and faith, like a golden clasp they bind to the heart of Christ every other heart, wherever it beats, wherever it suffers, wherever it yearns for consolation!

Jesus again groaning in himself approached the grave of Lazarus. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. He requested those who were standing by to remove the stone. This being done he lifted up his eyes and said, "Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me.— And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me!" And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" It was a thrilling moment that followed this command. The destiny of a world and the holiest hopes of man hung suspended as by a thread. It was to be the crowning miracle of all. He had raised the dead before, but not after so long a time had intervened or after burial had taken place.— The Jews entertained the idea that the dead were sometimes restored to life within three days after death. Lazarus had been dead four

days. A crowd of skeptics stood by looking on with breathless curiosity. What if it had been a failure! How would the skeptic have scoffed—how would the proud Pharisee have exulted—and how evermore would the pining heart of man have mourned without hope! Yes, it was a thrilling moment. The winds fainted and died away. The light seemed to moan and tremble on the distant hills. There was a breathless pause in the songs of the angels as they bowed with their harps over the golden walls of their beautiful home to witness the spectacle, and for a shining space the tall archangel standing before the Throne, bowed his star-crowned head upon his bosom and breathed forth the burden of a silent prayer! “Then, lo! he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes,” and straightway all heaven rung with a gush of rapturous music—the music of ten thousand angel voices and of ten thousand golden harps!

VIII.

THE LAND OF MEMORY.

While I mused the fire burned.—PSALMS xxxix, 3.

IT is not the decree of destiny that the wings of the immortal soul shall trail forever in the dust, and be forever pressed down and crippled by the work-day things of life. Beyond the world's din and strife, far from the hurrying, restless crowd, there is a land fair as the Christian's dream of heaven. Into this land escaping from the dull prison-house of the present, where chained to the ever turning wheel, she toils day after day for others, or for her own bread, raiment and fame, comes the soul at times seeking repose and joy. Here, shut in no more from the great and blessed light that falls so gloomily upon the dusty windows of her "breathing house," she sits with folded wings and a clear eye, while the past—all that hath been, both of joy and of sorrow—the noble deeds, the lofty

thoughts and sweet faces of other days—rising as at the sound of a silver trump from the graves of her forgetfulness, not shadowy and indistinct as midnight specters, but fair and life-like, pass before her in solemn, sad review.

In this land death has no sting, and the grave no victory. Time and decay also are powerless. Every thing is immortal, as if from beneath the deep roots of each ever-blossoming tree, and from the cold lips of each crystal rock, gushed forth unfailing streams of water like unto that of the fabled fountain so long sought after by De Leon and his comrades amid the ever-glades of the New World, and which had the power of bestowing immortal youth and felicity on all who bathed in its magic tide. Here affection never dies and love never grows cold, but live forever fresh and fair as at their birth. It is a realm of endless Summer, perennial groves and unclouded suns ; a realm where, though there is no night, the stars thrill with their mild radiance, and the moon, with her pensive smile ; while ever across life's stormy sea, filling our hearts and homes, comes a gale laden with the fragrance of the unfading flowers that fringe its far-off shores, as across the track of the heart-desponding mariner, long tossed amid dark and

dangerous shoals, glides a bird of passage, bringing pearly dew upon her wing and a green leaf to her beak, telling of Indian seas and isles of passage.

It is to us the land of transfiguration. As we enter in through its golden portals, old age vanishes, his trembling palsy, gray hairs and deep wrinkles, glides from us as if beneath the touch of an enchanter's wand ; and we are again young and again we feel the bounding pulse, the flushed cheek, and the struggling of the winged spirits of earlier and happier years. We are in the green meadows, where we were wont to gather the daisies and butter-cups, those choicest flowers of childhood ; and our feet press on the soft moss of old, the yielding moss in silent dells, and we are creded unto the forget-me-not and pale primrose. There is our diamond maker the glittering cascade—there the gray rocks on which we have often sat, and the broad, sunny openings in the forest—the beautiful wild rose, the sweet honeysuckle, and the red berries, almost as brilliant as stars, clustering amid the dark boughs of the mountain-ash. There, too, are the pine-clad hills around our early home, the far-off, distant mountains and the blue lake. All seems so distinct and real. There they live whom we thought dead. From that green and silent shore they g



upon us with their star-like eyes, and tenderly they speak to us in the sweet, familiar tones of other days ; and day after day, even amid the the din and tumult of a great city, and above the noise and bustle of the ever-moving crowd, do we hear, in fancy, the glad song of the summer bird, or the music of the mountain torrent, or the wind moaning among the trees, which we have so often listened to in the quiet of our childhood days.

There are times and seasons when the soul loves best to roam in this land—times when she goes forth, day after day, from the dusty streets and dark dwellings of the Present to its green groves and meadows ; yet half unconsciously, and as if following the sound of unseen feet.

Spring, that fair type of our immortality, is, perhaps, more than any other season, calculated to lead the soul back into the land of memory ; while Fall and Winter lead her forward as it were, to the cloudy verge and into the very shadow of a clime whose beauties she can but dimly see. Fall crushes the gentle flowers beneath her sandals, and they perish. Before the blast of her breath the landscape grows pale and the turf cold. Following fast in her path Winter comes, gaunt and grim as death himself—as the

Angel of Desolation—shouting with a hoarse voice on the barren plain and in the leafless forest, while with one hand he swings his keen and glittering scythe, and with the other gloved in ice, points sternly toward the grave. But not such is the mission of Spring. With all her beautiful hopes and urgent warnings—her serene countenance and heavenly beauty—like a mermaid from the briny deep, or an angel from the shadowy sepulchier, she rises from the dark bosom of the Past. Her flower-embroidered garments trail musically on the earth's floor, and with her white arms, wreathed in sunshine, lovingly doth she clasp the gray old mountains to her bosom. And it is Spring that the soul loves best to follow into the fair land of memory; for she is herself a child of that land.

Thrice blessed are the long bright days of Spring! They are with us now—and we are no longer what we were. Old age, and care, and hopeless grief, have fallen from us like a garment. We are again young; and again we live over the checkered past. The land of which I have been speaking is all around us. We live no more in the Present; but for a season our daily companions are saints and angels. That indescribable longing to behold once more

the faces of our departed friends—for some heavenly messenger to come and roll away the stone from the sepulcher's mouth—which possessed us in the winter days, has become less strong and ardent. Few now are our thoughts of death and decay; while the glory of the resurrection is round about us as a living presence. We think and feel that immortality is ours. Age, and tribulation and death, what are ye to our bounding hearts, to our souls all abroad beneath the sunny heavens and the starry skies!

The light rests on the mountains like a crown of gold; so it rested when we were young. The sunbeams bridge the meadow brooks with silver; so were they bridged when we were young!

Yet, since the last advent of Spring, even, many are the changes that have taken place in our midst; broader has grown the land of memory, and more thickly is it populated. Death with his invisible scythe, has been busy in the fields of life. In the resting place of the dead, there are new graves over which the first green grass is growing and the first buds expanding into blossom; by the hearth-stone there are more vacant seats; and the shepherds of a thousand flocks are counting anew their dead lambs!

Thus far, sacred is the representation of the land of memory,—for I have spoken of it as it appears unto the good and pure in heart—unto those whose lives have been fair and honorable. I now turn to speak of it briefly as a land of *remorse* and *terror*—as it rises to the troubled vision of those who have trodden the paths of crime and error. To them, though a golden streak may still, and forever, bind the far-off horizon of youth, each fountain is as a mirror revealing the soul's deformity, and its every stain, distinct and indelible as was that on the hand of a Macbeth. From each thicket and grove as if they had taken life and form, rise, and glide to and fro before the soul's guilty vision, the evil deeds and crimes of a dark and fearful life.

There the victim of intemperance is again a fair-haired boy—and again he sees the cruel tempter nestling in his path, and a fond mother, full of sad misgivings, sitting at midnight by the desolate hearth, waiting his return from scenes of mirth and debauchery; and again he lives over the dark days of the breaking of her heart.

There the hardened thief sees temptation gliding like a subtil serpent over the crystal walls of his departed honor; and feels once

more, burning into his very soul, the first glance of suspicion. There the extortioner wrings again with his bony hand the life blood from the hearts of the poor ; and again he rears his stately palace on the skulls of men. There in each gloomy silent dell, before the shrinking murderer, springs up his murdered victim with his bleeding wounds and his dying curse. There a Belshazzar sees again and again, the fiery handwriting on his palace wall ; and hears the exultant shouts of the foe, as through the drained river-bed, legion after legion, bearing swords and flaming torches, they come pouring into his fair city. There the warrior, with a nation's laurels fresh upon his brow, beholds once more the trampled plain, the smoke of sacked and burning villages ; and hears the awful din of carnage, the shouts and oaths of his ruthless soldiery, the groans of the dying and the wail of the mourner. Again before him rise the widowed mother, the orphaned child, the outraged maiden, and the childless father.

There on every flower and on every leaf are recorded, never to be effaced, the thoughts, and words, and deeds of every man, as in the Book of God's Remembrance ; and there, day after day, and in the watches of the solemn night, must

the guilty trembling soul go, led on by an invisible power, to meet its stern accusers ; and wander with scorched and bleeding feet, over burning deserts and through gloomy forests, haunted by all that is terrible.

Thus, shall the land of memory be as we form it ; thus, shall its beauty, or its gloom depend upon the lives we live ; therefore, should every man walk with cautious feet and build with a careful hand—remembering that each thought, and word, and deed will live forever. If so he lives, then, from the far-off turrets of the heaven toward which he is journeying, as he lays aside his worn staff and unbinds his dusty sandals for the peace and repose of his eternal home, and turns to look back upon the road over which he has passed, fair unto his eye shall appear the land of memory, with its groves bathed in sunshine, and its fields robed in living green, as to the enraptured vision of the weary Patriarch, from the serene heights of Pisgah appeared the promised Canaan.



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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has become a major employer in the UK, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy.

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